A CRITICAL PARTNERSHIP: THE ROLE OF AN INTERIM PASTOR IN THE

CHANGE, TRANSITION AND TRANSFORMATION OF A CONGREGATION

A THESIS-PROJECT

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To my wife Ruthie, and our daughters Bekah and Anna, who have experienced the ups

and downs of many interim periods with me.

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Soli Deo Gloria.

ABSTRACT

This thesis-project is intended to shed light on the origin and practice of interim ministry with a specific focus on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The concepts of change, transition, and transformation are explored from the perspectives of Old and New Testaments, business models and the current practice of interim ministry with its stages and tasks. The survey which was administered as part of this thesis-project assesses the necessary partnership between the interim pastor and the congregation. While not exhaustive, the findings of this work raise issues for future research.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING

"Our pastor is leaving." These words have been or will be heard in countless congregations across the country. Often these words are filled with emotion, sometimes positive and sometimes negative. They indicate a reality that will affect every congregation at some point. The Barna Group in 2009 published a report on the tenure of pastors in mainline churches. As stated in the report, "One of the enduring idiosyncrasies of mainline churches is the brief tenure of pastors in a church. On average, these pastors last four years before moving to another congregation. That is about half the average among Protestant pastors in non-mainline churches."[1] The reality is that no pastor serves a congregation forever. At some point a pastor will leave.

The time between the announcement of the departure of a pastor and the arrival of the new pastor has come to be known as the interim period. It is an interlude or a temporary time in the life of a congregation. As a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) this researcher has experienced five interim periods, not as an interim pastor, but as a pastor on staff.[2] These interim periods, while at times frustrating and stress-filled, became a catalyst to learn about the complex nature of the interim period and interim ministry. Each experience provided opportunities for various observations and reflections regarding the dynamics, responses, and reactions of the congregation, the elders, and the staff – both ordained and non-ordained – throughout the various interim periods. In

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[1] "Report Examines the State of Mainline Protestant Churches," The Barna Group, Ltd, December, 7, 2009, accessed 10/25/15, https://www.barna.org/barna-update/leadership/323-report-examines-the-state-of-mainline-protestant-churches#.ViuRaBCrS8U.

[2] A detailed description of the researcher's experiences in these various contexts can be found in Appendix A.

addition, there were observations and reflections regarding the ministries and styles of the various interim pastors in each context. However, while each interim period is as different as the congregations that experiences it, each interim period begins with the departure of a pastor.

The reasons for the departure of a pastor in the life of a congregation vary. Positively, the departure may mark the honorable retirement of a pastor who has provided faithful service to a congregation or a pastor who has received a new call to serve a different congregation with new challenges and possibilities. In addition, a pastor may have completed his or her contract with a congregation. These are positive changes at least for the pastors involved. Negative experiences surround departure as well. The departure may be due to one or more factors professionally and personally. Professionally pastors leave because of restructuring or downsizing, conflict with leaders or members, misconduct, or misunderstandings. Personally, pastors may leave a congregation due to discouragement, a sense of failure, loneliness, moral failure, financial pressure, anger, burnout, physical health, marriage issues, family issues, or tragically because of death.[3] Each of these factors, individually or collectively, can have a negative effect on the life of a pastor, and his or her family, as well as the life of a congregation.

Under the best circumstances, no pastor will serve a congregation indefinitely. At some point he or she will leave and a congregation will find itself in need of a pastor. Whatever the circumstances around the departure of a pastor may be, the congregation finds itself in the midst of a transition. A transition, according to Merriam-Webster is a

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[3] Tim Peters, *"Ten Real Reasons Pastors Quit Too Soon,"* ChurchLeaders.com, accessed May 15, 2015, http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/161343-tim_peters_10_common_reasons_pastors_ quit_too_soon.html/.

"passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another."[4] This is a critical juncture for a congregation as its pastoral leadership is changing.

William Bridges in his book, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change* states, "transition starts with an ending and finishes with a beginning."[5] If this is true in the pastoral context, the pastor's announcement that he or she is leaving brings about an ending. It initiates a change for both the pastor and the congregation. The ensuing pastoral transition however, while leading to a new beginning with a new pastor, initiates a time of transition for the congregation. It can be a time filled with emotion surrounding the end of the pastorate and the beginning of an uncertain future for the congregation. This transition, which has come to be known as "the interim," is the focus of this thesis-project.

When a pastor announces that he or she is leaving the news can bring about a number of different emotional reactions and responses for individuals. Some, who have had a close relationship with the pastor, may be hurt, numb, or even devastated that the pastor is leaving. Others, who didn't care for the pastor or have felt alienated from the pastor, may be glad that the pastor is leaving. Still others may not know what they feel or may simply not care.

The news can also trigger a number of significant questions for a congregation. Why is our pastor leaving? What do we do now? Who will conduct the weekly worship services and the special services like weddings and funerals? What do we do about

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[4] Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. "transition," accessed May 9, 2015, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transition.

[5] William Bridges, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change.* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 5.

Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter? Who will provide leadership for the elders and the committees? Is there a process for us to follow? Who will lead us through this process? How do we go about finding a new pastor? How long will it take? Where will we look for a new pastor? What will happen to our attendance? What will happen to our finances?

While the reactions and responses will vary, when a pastor leaves a season of ministry ends and a congregation enters into a transition. The transition the congregation experiences is a change in pastoral relationship. The pastoral relationship that had existed will quickly come to an end and a congregation will move into another stage or phase of ministry. In a smaller congregation it may be that the solo pastor is leaving. In a larger congregation it may be that the senior pastor, an associate pastor, or someone serving in another defined pastoral role is departing from the church.

The transition between pastors is not a new phenomenon for congregations. Historically, the "prevailing model for the interim period was to bring in an older retired pastor as a 'placeholder,' even to 'babysit.'"[6] Congregational life was "paused" until a new pastor was found. The assumption was the only change for the congregation was the pastor and when a new pastor was found life would continue on as it had in the past. But, over the years, this prevailing model began to shift. A growing and focused interest regarding this interim period and the ministry which could take place during this time began to emerge across denominations.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s a great deal of research was conducted in association with the Alban Institute by Loren Mead, Celia Hahn, and Bill Yon.[7] This was

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[6] Anthony B. Robinson, "Rethinking Interim Ministry," *Congregations* 39, no. 4 (2012): 15.

[7] Robinson, 15.

"one of the first organized efforts to study the role of the interim pastor."[8] Through this focused study and research Meade, Hahn, and Yon concluded that the time of transition between pastors is "a prime time for renewal"[9] for a congregation. It is an opportunity for growth, partnership, and transformation. Further, the research suggested that this interim period was not merely a time for a "placeholder" or a "babysitter," but a time for "crucial developmental tasks"[10] which would be beneficial for the health and the future of the congregation.

As a result of the research, the Alban Institute called together the first interim pastors' conference in 1975 in St. Louis, Missouri.[11] By the early 1980s the "training and development of interim ministry specialists had become the new normal for many denominations."[12] Currently there is an Interim Ministry Network which includes at least twenty-six different denominations and gathers annually to provide training to those who are serving as interim pastors.[13]

The Presbyterian Church, as a mainline denomination, took part in the development of this history. Since the 1950s Presbyterians kept "an informal roster of pastors, primarily retired, who where interested in interim services in parishes."[14] Subsequent to the Alban Institute conference in 1975, the Presbyterians began to provide

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[8] Alan G. Gripe, *The Interim Pastor's Manual*, Rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1997), 13.

[9] Robinson, 15.

[10] Robinson, 15.

[11] Gripe, 13.

[12] Robinson, 15.

[13] "Annual Conference History," Interim Ministry Network, accessed June 20, 2015, http://www.imnedu.org/annual-conference/.

[14] Gripe, 14.

"a variety of training programs, some introductory and some more in depth" to prepare pastors for this specific ministry.[15] Interim ministry training continues to be provided each year by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at various locations across the United States for pastors who are interested in learning about it and considering serving a congregation in transition.[16]

In addition to training around the nation, a group "of interim ministry practitioners and educators gathered in 1985 to discuss the formation of a professional entity that would provide information and support to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) regarding practices of interim ministry."[17] In 1986 The Association of Presbyterian Interim Ministry Specialists (APIMS) was established in order to support those engaged in interim ministry.[18] From their inception, APIMS existed "to provide support for pastors, spouses, and families as well as governing bodies within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who are involved with interim ministry, and to provide information regarding placement, training, certification and research in the specialized field of interim ministry."[19]

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[15] Gripe, 14.

[16] Research Services Office, *"A Study of the Effectiveness of Interim Pastors,"* A Report from Research Services of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) September 11, 2007), 4, accessed May 24, 2015, https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/ministers/interim pastors/.

[17] Bob Agnew, "Moderator's Letter," Association of Interim Ministry Specialists, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) accessed May 18, 2015, http://www.apims.org/moderators-letter.htm.

[18] Bob Agnew, "Moderator's Letter," Association of Interim Ministry Specialists, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) accessed May 18, 2015, http://www.apims.org/moderators-letter.htm.

[19] "Mission: Vision, Goals, and Membership Information," Association of Interim Ministry Specialists, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) accessed May 18, 2015, http://apims.org/mission.htm.

Since the early research and conversations in the 1970s, interim ministry has developed and congregations have benefited. In 2007 the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) published a report based on research conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of interim pastors.[20] Questionnaires were used to survey four groups of leaders within the denomination: presbytery executives[21], the chairpersons of presbytery committees on ministry[22], clerks of session[23] in congregations which had an interim pastor, and pastors who followed an interim pastor.

While the results of the survey supported interim ministry in general, there were two findings of interest, specifically at the level of local congregations. First, clerks generally responded that the interim pastors had completed the necessary tasks. The second finding, in contrast, found that the pastors who followed the interim pastors were not as positive as the clerks regarding the work of the interim pastors. While these pastors supported the concept of interim ministry, some expressed that "it often does not live up to its promise."[24]

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[20] Research Services, *"A Study of the Effectiveness of Interim Pastors,"* A Report from Research Services of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) September 11, 2007), 4, accessed May 24, 2015, https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-councilministries/ministers/interim-pastors/.

[21] *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-3.0110), 47. A presbytery executive is an administrative leader of the presbytery elected by the presbytery.

[22] *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-3.0307), 54. Each presbytery may designate "entities" such as a committee on ministry to accomplish various functions.

[23] *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-3.0104), 42-43. The clerk of session is elected by the session, or elders, currently serving in leadership. The role of the clerk is generally to maintain rolls, records and proceedings of the meetings of the elders and to serve as secretary for meetings of the congregation. (G-1.0505), 23.

[24] Research Services, *"A Study of the Effectiveness of Interim Pastors,"* A Report from Research Services of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) September 11, 2007), 4, accessed May 24, 2015, https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-councilministries/ministers/interim-pastors/.

There are specifically four issues raised by these findings. The first has to do with the "necessary tasks." What are the "necessary tasks" that need to be completed during the interim period? Have these tasks been identified and communicated to the elders currently serving in leadership on the session? And, who has the responsibility of communicating these tasks to the elders serving on the session?

The second has to do with those who were contacted for the survey. While it is important on the congregational level to include clerks of session and pastors who followed the interim pastors, there seems to be a constituency left out of the research. Why were the people directly affected by ministry of interim pastors not included in the surveys? That is the ruling elders[25] of a congregation who work closely with an interim pastor in leading a congregation. All the others included in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) survey are stakeholders. The presbytery executive, the chair of the committee on ministry, the pastor following the interim, and the clerk, who works closely with the interim pastor, all have important roles. But, the congregation and its elected leaders, specifically ruling elders, have a lot at stake as well. It is their congregation and the ministry of the congregation has been entrusted to them.

The third has to do with the "necessary tasks" and the uniqueness of each congregation. Do the "necessary tasks" all apply equally to each congregation in transition. Does "one size fit all" or is there a need to consider certain tasks that need special focus during the interim period?

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[25] *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-2.0301), 27. Congregations "elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they 'lord it over' the congregation (Matthew 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church . . ."

The fourth has to do with the leadership that needs to take place during this interim period. How will the "necessary tasks" be accomplished? What are the roles and responsibilities of the interim pastor and how will he or she partner together with the session in leading the congregation?

These four issues – the interim tasks, the people of the congregation, the unique situation of a congregation, and partnership in leading the congregation – are all important components of the interim period. Congregations, in the interim period, encounter change, transition, and even transformation. The need for interim pastoral leadership in a congregation during this period is not in question. However, of greater concern is the partnership in accomplishing the work which needs to be undertaken within the unique context of a particular congregation.

The focus of this thesis-project is to examine this interim pastoral leadership. From change, through transition, to transformation there is a critical partnership which must exist between the congregation, it's leadership, and it's interim pastor. This partnership in the interim period is multifaceted. It is a partnership between an interim leader and the current leaders of a congregation – ordained and non-ordained. It is a partnership between the interim leader and the whole congregation in helping them to move through the transition – the "in-between time"[26] – from the previous pastor to the next installed pastor. If this partnership is to be effective and lead from change, through transition and ultimately to transformation, then an interim leader must communicate clearly the various tasks that will help, both the congregational leaders and the congregation as a whole, to move through the transition.

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[26] Gripe, 13.

Chapter Two will explore the Biblical and theological foundations of partnership in a time of transition. This will focus specifically on the Old Testament story of the Exodus and the partnership between God and Moses and the people of Israel during a time of transition and ultimately transformation. In addition, a New Testament model of partnership in change, transition, and transformation is illustrated in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ leading up to Pentecost. Both examples are foundational to understanding transitional ministry.

Chapter Three will survey models of change that outline the process of change and help to inform the interim process. In addition, the specific stages of an interim period and the specific tasks for an interim pastor and a congregation will be explored with an emphasis on partnership throughout the transition.

Chapter Four will describe the survey which was developed and administered to the sessions of five Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations in various stages of interim transition in Mission Presbytery (south central Texas). The data will include demographic information to determine cultural context, educational information to provide an understanding of the interim tasks, and an assessment of whether those tasks were communicated and accomplished.

Finally, Chapter Five will provide conclusions regarding this research focusing on the nature of partnership in the interim period. In addition, suggestions for future research regarding the identification and accomplishment of the interim tasks will be noted.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The concept of interim ministry is not new to the church. While it has received a great deal of attention in recent decades, the foundations and patterns for interim ministry are found in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Each Testament contains paradigms illustrating groups of people encountering change, the subsequent transition, and the transformation into something new. This chapter first considers the initial definitions and concepts of change, transition, and transformation. Second, these three concepts are examined biblically and theologically with examples from the Old and New Testaments. In addition, theological and practical implications and reflections for interim ministry are identified for each of these concepts. And finally, some conclusions are drawn.

Initial Definitions and Concepts

Warren Schulz, writing about interim ministry, highlights the biblical and theological concepts of change, transition, and transformation noting specifically that they are not synonymous.[1] He defines these terms as follows:

> *Change*: The inevitable movement of life's forces.
> *Transition*: The process by which we must deal with the inevitable changes of life.
> *Transformation*: The new shape that occurs after transition, toward which change is aimed.[2]

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[1] Warren Schulz, "The Biblical and Theological Basis for Interim Ministry" in *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry*, ed. Roger S. Nicholson, (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1998), 121.

[2] Schulz, 121.

These initial definitions provide the context to consider examples of change, transition, and transformation and the implications for the practice of interim ministry.

If as stated by Schulz that "change is the inevitable movement of life's forces,"[3] then as time and life's forces move forward people will consistently and unavoidably experience change, both individually and as a culture. Recently, the Barna Group highlighted several of changes that effect the way Americans live and understand the cultural landscape. These changes, they say, will continue to effect even further changes in our life and culture.

> Long before iPhones, the nation's first black president, or even before Wikipedia had a domain name, American life was just turning the corner into another century.
>
> This was before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Hurricane Katrina, health care reform, the housing bubble and its subsequent crash, and, the onset of the Recession. Yet over a decade later, all of these national events and more have changed—and continue to change—the cultural landscape of American life.[4]

Change can happen as the result of life's forces externally, in relationships, culture, institutions, and organizations. But change can happen internally, or psychologically, as well. It can happen as individuals and organizations seek to process and understand what is happening in the world and in their lives. In some cases it leads to a change of mind or a change of perspective. In other cases it leads to a longing for the way things were in the past. And, in still other cases people may become stuck, unable to deal with the changes themselves, the pace of change, and the number of changes they encounter. The point is

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[3] Schulz, 121.

[4] "How the Last Decade Changed American Life," Barna Group, July 31, 2013, accessed August 15, 2015, https://www.barna.orgbarna-update/culture/624-how-the-last-decade-changed-american-life#.VdYh3JNVikp.

simply this, change continues to be a constant in all of life. Even the congregations of churches are not immune to change.

The word "transition," as cited previously, literally means the "passage from one state, stage, subject or place to another."[5] It can be understood as a movement from one perception, understanding, or way of thinking to another. Schulz elaborates on the concept of transition identifying it as a period of anxiety, pain, and struggle.

> We certainly have noticed that transition gets little applause anywhere, because transition means struggle. It is often a wilderness experience. At its best, transition causes anxiety; at it worst, it causes pain. We want to avoid as much pain and struggle as possible. Yet, in divine wisdom, God consistently allows us to experience it. It is as if God has created us so that we grow through change and the transition that accompanies it. Over and over we are thrust by change into dying to something, sinking into a chaos or despair, and then rising again to something new.[6]

Transition, therefore, refers to dealing with the "inevitable changes"[7] that have been experienced either internally, externally, or both. It involves struggle and can result in a variety of human emotions. While not easy, it does provide the context for growth to happen or for something new to take place.

The initiation of change and the subsequent transition are phases of a three-part process which take place over time. They do not exist in isolation nor do they take place immediately. However, they provide the context and opportunity for transformation to take place. Transformation is defined as "an act" or "a process" which brings about

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[5] *Merrian-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "transition," accessed on August 20, 2015, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transition.

[6] Schulz, 122.

[7] Schulz, 122.

something new or different.[8] And that is the point made by Schulz. Something new emerges when transformation takes place.

These concepts of change, transition, and transformation have been and are a part of the present culture. They are present in both the Old and the New Testaments. As the Biblical accounts are read and studied the inevitable movement of life's forces can be observed as well as the struggles of individuals and groups of people to deal with the subsequent transitions which need to take place. When this process takes place and is embraced, something new can emerge.

The Biblical Paradigms for Change, Transition, and Transformation

The Biblical paradigms chosen to examine and illustrate the concepts of change, transition, and transformation come from both the Old and New Testaments. The account of the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings of the people of Israel will serve as the Old Testament paradigm. The New Testament paradigm includes the time frame from the account of Jesus' betrayal, death, burial, and resurrection through the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Both of these accounts occur in specific contexts which impact individuals and groups of people. As such, they both provide helpful information to consider regarding interim ministry.

Biblical Paradigms and Theological Reflections on Change

Change was a common occurrence in the narratives of the Scriptures. In the narrative accounts of the Exodus and the life of Jesus and his disciples, "the inevitable

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[8] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "transformation," accessed September 6, 2015, http://www. Merriam-Webster.com/dictionary/transformation.

movement of life's forces"[9] were at work. First the Old Testament paradigm is explored and second the New Testament paradigm.

Old Testament Paradigm

The effects of the forces of life are exhibited in different ways in the lives of the people of Israel in the story of the Exodus. In the beginning of the book of Exodus, the people of Israel lived as slaves in Egypt. While the last several chapters of the book of Genesis provide the detail of how the family of Jacob traveled to Egypt and found favor with Pharaoh, the first chapter of Exodus gives continuity to the story of the people of Israel.[10] These chapters underscore the reality of how God was at work as he brought his people to the land of Egypt and provided for them. Yet, as generations passed, the people of Israel fell out of favor with the Egyptians. However, God did not forget these people. God blessed them with what could be referred to as "unnatural family growth"[11] even in the midst of the oppression they endured as slaves. At face value, the context was grim for the Israelites. They groaned and cried out to God for help.[12]

While "the inevitable movement of life's forces" had their effect on the people of Israel, they also had their effect on Moses. Having grown up as an Israelite in the house of Pharaoh's daughter he was "educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was

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[9] Schulz, 121.

[10] John I. Durham, *Exodus*, vol. 3, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1987), 5.

[11] Durham, 5.

[12] Exodus 2:23. All scripture citations are taken from the New International Version, 2011, unless otherwise noted.

powerful in speech and action."[13] At the age of forty, he murdered an Egyptian, fled to Midian, married, and tended the flocks of his father-in-law.[14] Each of these experiences prepared Moses for both his identification with the oppression of the people of Israel and for his leadership of them. Subsequently, at the age of eighty, Moses is confronted by the LORD at the burning bush and is sent back to Egypt to lead the people of Israel out of the land of slavery and oppression.[15]

Even though he was in a prime position to lead the people of Israel, Moses lacked confidence. He raised objections regarding his identity, his mandate, and his leadership abilities. The LORD initially responded to each objection with encouragement and then finally, with rebuke.[16] No matter how Moses objected the LORD provided what Moses needed. The LORD even called upon Moses' brother, Aaron, to speak to the people so that Moses wouldn't have to speak.[17] The point is that Moses' confidence as a leader was not to be in himself, but rather in the LORD who called him and prepared him to lead in a context of change.

"The inevitable movements of life's forces" continued to have their effect in several ways. First, as Moses (and Aaron) gathered the elders (the leadership team) of the Israelites and told them what the LORD had said and that he was concerned about them

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[13] Acts 7:22.

[14] Exodus 2:11-3:1.

[15] Acts 7:30-36.

[16] Appendix I contains a chart outlining Moses' objections to leading the people and God's response to each objection.

[17] Exodus 4:14-16.

and saw their misery.[18] Second, as Moses (and Aaron) confronted Pharaoh and demanded that the people be released. Third, as Pharaoh's heart was hardened and a series of ten plagues was unleashed on Egypt beginning with a plague of blood and culminating in a plague of on the firstborn.[19] And finally, when Pharaoh called for Moses (and Aaron) and told them to leave Egypt with all the Israelites and go worship the LORD as they requested.[20]

It is at this point that change happened for the people of Israel. The changes that happened in the lives of the people of Israel, as a group, and in the life of Moses, as an individual, were the result of "the inevitable movement of life's forces."[21] This change was significant for several reasons. First, the people had a context and a history. The people had been in Egypt for four hundred thirty years.[22] All they knew at this point was life as slaves. But now life had changed. The people of Israel were now free. Second, the people had a new leader in the person of Moses. Unlike Pharaoh, who held the people of Israel captive, Moses was an experienced shepherd who was in a unique position to lead the people. Moses would physically lead the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt. And, third, the LORD was actively involved in this change. It was the LORD who heard the cries of the people, raised up and called Moses, ultimately hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and ushered in this change in the life of the people.

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[18] Exodus 4:29-31.

[19] Exodus 7:14-12:30.

[20] Exodus 12:31-32.

[21] Schulz, 121.

[22] Exodus 12:40-41.

New Testament Paradigm

In a similar way to the story of the Exodus, "the inevitable movement of life's forces" were at work in the lives of Jesus and his disciples. The context was different, but the change they experienced was just as real and just as life changing. The gospels give context to the ministry of Jesus leading up to his death, burial and resurrection. Luke records the beginning of Jesus' ministry as he read from the scroll of Isaiah in a synagogue in Nazareth.

> The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
> because he has anointed me
> to proclaim good news to the poor.
> He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
> and recovery of sight for the blind,
> to set the oppressed free,
> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.[23]

Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.[24]

Jesus Christ selected twelve disciples to be with him, to learn about him, his ministry, and his mission as he fulfills these words. Not only that, as a leader, Jesus had called[25] and prepared[26] his disciples for the ministry they would encounter. He modeled this for them as he interacted with people – preaching, teaching, healing and performing miracles. He gave them practical experience, instructions, and commissioned them for the same. In addition, he told them about the upcoming change they were about to experience. However, when Jesus was betrayed, arrested, tried, and sentenced to crucifixion as a

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[23] Luke 4:18-19, see also Isaiah 60:1-2a.

[24] Luke 4:21b.

[25] The gospels each record the calling of the disciples. These can be seen in the following texts: Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:10c; John 1:35-51.

[26] As the disciples are with Jesus, they see him preach, teach, heal, and perform miracles. In addition, he involved them in his ministry and then sent them out with authority. See Matthew 10:1, 5-42.

common criminal, these twelve disciples were not ready for what they experienced. This is the context for the situational change that came about in their lives.

The change they experienced was ultimately Jesus' death. However, that change which took place over the course of a few hours, began with Jesus' betrayal. Throughout the course of Jesus' ministry, he told the disciples three times that this would happen, but they didn't understand.[27] After the first time, even though Jesus spoke "plainly about this," Peter's response of rebuking him shows that he didn't have a clear understanding about "the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."[28] The second time Jesus was clear about what he was going to experience but the disciples misunderstood what he was saying and they feared asking him what his words meant.[29] And even after the third time, the disciples simply didn't understand.[30]

"The inevitable movement of life's forces" was taking place as Jesus called and prepared his disciples for ministry and mission. He prepared them for what was going to

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[27] The first instance of Jesus Christ speaking of being handed over to death and rising on the third day is recorded in Mark 8:31-33; see also Matthew 16:21-28 and Luke 9:21-27.

The second instance is recorded in Mark 9:30-32; see also Matthew 17:22-23 and Luke 9:43b-45. This time the prediction is followed by a teaching on greatness. In Mark 9:33-37 and Luke 9:46-48 the teaching on greatness occurs immediately after Jesus' prediction of his death. However, in Matthew 18:1-5 the teaching on greatness does not occur immediately following Jesus' prediction of his death. There is a four verse teaching about the temple tax (Matthew 17:24-28).

The third instance is recorded in Mark 10:32-34, see also Matthew 20:17-19 and Luke 18:31-34.

It should be noted that the Gospel of John bears a certain similarity to the Synoptic Gospels in that John records Jesus' prediction of his death but not three times. However, in Chapters 13 through 17, Jesus instructs his disciples in preparation for his death. He instructs them in servanthood, the comfort and work of the Holy Spirit, remaining in him, the world's hatred of disciples, the disciples' grief turning to joy, and in prayer – for himself, his disciples, and those who would believe in him. Specifically, in John 16:16-33 Jesus speaks with his disciples regarding their difficulty understanding his words to them. Even when they state, "This makes us believe that you came from God," Jesus goes on to tell them about the troubles that will come.

[28] Mark 8:31-33; see also Matthew 16:21-28 and Luke 9:21-27.

[29] Mark 9:30-32; see also Matthew 17:22-23 and Luke 9:43b-45.

[30] Mark 10:32-34, see also Matthew 20:17-19 and Luke 18:31-34.

happen by teaching them, giving them practical ministry experience, and telling them what would happen to him. Even though they heard him predict his death (and subsequent resurrection), they didn't seem to hear or understand what Jesus had said. Over the course of several hours from their time together in the Garden of Gethsemane to Jesus crucifixion, they experienced the words that Jesus had spoken, ". . . and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him."[31]

The change that the disciples experienced was significant. First, this change, brought on by "the inevitable movement of life's forces," was clearly an ending for them. The teacher from whom they had learned for three years was betrayed, tried, sentenced to death, and died on a cross. And second, this was neither what they expected nor what they wanted. Three times they heard the teachings from Jesus about what was going to happen, however misunderstanding and fear, at least in part, kept them from fully comprehending that this would indeed happen.

Theological Reflections on Change

The changes in the Exodus account and in the life of Jesus' disciples each occurred in different contexts. However, in each case "the inevitable movement of life's forces" happened. These forces in life which initiated change included circumstances and people. What the future would hold was not clear. The change that confronts a congregation when a pastor leaves is not unlike the people of Israel leaving the life of slavery in Egypt and entering into a new found freedom or the disciples having to deal

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[31] Mark 10:33-34.

with the devastating events that led to the death of Jesus Christ. Changes can be positive or negative. While the change experienced by the people of Israel was desired, the change experienced by Jesus' disciples was not desired. It was "the inevitable movement of life's forces" that were at work in each case. Life would not be the same as it was. It would be different. Change ushers in an ending as well as a new beginning. In the context of a congregation, the ending is the way of life under the leadership of the pastor who had served in the congregation. The new beginning has been initiated, but what the future will hold is unsure at best.

According to Schulz, "Change is orchestrated by God. It is inevitable."[32] Change was orchestrated in the Exodus to not only bring freedom to the people of Israel, but to form them into the God's people. Change was orchestrated in the Gospels to accomplish the work of redemption for all of humanity but also to prepare Jesus' followers of future ministry. While the people of Israel longed for freedom from slavery, they didn't necessarily understand what the future would be like. While the disciples in the Gospels didn't understand what was ahead, Jesus' death had to happen to accomplish God's purposes.

Whether it is a large group of people leaving a life of slavery, the disciples losing their leader, or a congregation losing a pastor, change happens. The changes that happen may, like the Israelites, be something that was hoped for or, like the disciples, not desired or understood. However, changes will continue to happen as life's forces continue to move. When changes happen in a congregation, there can be a sense of uncertainty which gives rise to different emotions. It is at this point that a leader is needed to guide the

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[32] Schulz, 126.

people through the change much like Moses led the people of Israel and Jesus led the disciples.

In contrast to the constant and unavoidable changes that happen in the life and world of human beings, the Scriptures teach that God is unchangeable or immutable. Louis Berkof in *Systematic Theology* writes of God's immutability stating,

> He is devoid of all change, not only in His Being, but also in His perfections, and in His purposes and promises. In virtue of this attribute He is exalted above all becoming, and is free from all accession or diminution and from all growth or decay in His Being or perfections. His knowledge and plans, His moral principles and volitions remain forever the same.[33]

Berkof is quick to note that even though the Scriptures do contain passages that speak of God changing, these are not to be understood as God changing. Rather, as there is "change round about Him, change in the relationships of men to Him, but there is no change in His Being, His attributes, His purpose, His motives of action, or His promises."[34] As humanity and all creation live in the midst of constant change, it is God who remains constant. As congregations face a change in leadership, interim pastors have the privilege of reminding the people that God is present and his purposes and promises will not fail.

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[33] Louis Berkof, *Systematic Theology* (1939; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 58-59. Berkhof notes the following passages which teach the immutability of God: Exodus 3:14; Psalm 102:26-28; Isaiah 41:4; 48:12; Malachi 3:6; Romans 1:23; Hebrews 1:11-12; James 1:17.

[34] Berkhof, 59.

Biblical Paradigms and Theological Reflections on Transition

After change happens there is a time of transition. Transition is the "process by which we must deal with the inevitable changes of life."[35] According to Schulz, this is where people experience anxiety, pain, and struggle.[36] Neither the people of Israel nor the disciples of Jesus were ready for what they would experience. A return to look at the continuing stories of the Exodus and the experience of Jesus' disciples will illustrate this concept.

Old Testament Paradigm

Life had changed for Moses and the people of Israel. When they left Egypt they entered into a time of transition. This meant that both Moses and the people of Israel had to "deal with the inevitable changes of life" outside of Egypt. This transition took place over the course of four decades. During this time Moses, as the transitional leader, was affirmed by the people when things went well and challenged when they disagreed or when things didn't go as they desired.

While the people of Israel were delighted to finally leave a life of slavery in Egypt, they encountered various situations and responded in different ways to these challenges. Of the various challenges they encountered, five illustrate the way they responded to "the inevitable changes of life." They include terror at the crossing of the Red Sea,[37] grumbling two times about needing water to drink,[38] grumbling about starving

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[35] Schulz, 121.

[36] Schulz, 122.

[37] Exodus 14:10.

[38] Exodus 15:24 and 17:2.

in the desert,[39] and questioning where Moses went when he was on the mountain with God.[40] Each of these situations are accompanied by God's presence and a specific response.

Once they were out of the land of slavery, the people of Israel were quickly filled with terror when they saw Pharaoh and his armies in pursuit of them and they complained about leaving Egypt.[41] However, as the people left Egypt, they were not alone. God's presence was clearly visible to the people of Israel as a "pillar of cloud" during the day and a "pillar of fire" at night.[42] The LORD, through the outstretched hand of his servant Moses, brought the people through the Red Sea on dry ground and none of the Egyptians survived.[43] In response, "the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant."[44]

The next challenge they encountered was as they entered the Desert of Shur. They had been without water for three days in the desert. As they arrived at Marah, the water they drank was bitter so they grumbled against Moses asking, "What are we to drink?"[45] Moses cried to the LORD on behalf of the people, and after following the LORD's instruction there was drinkable water.

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[39] Exodus 16:2-3.

[40] Exodus 32:1.

[41] Exodus 14:10-12.

[42] Exodus 13:21-22.

[43] Exodus 14:26-31.

[44] Exodus 14:31.

[45] Exodus 15:22-24

As they came to the Desert of Sin, roughly a month and a half after they had left Egypt and several weeks after the experience with the water at Marah, "the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron" because of a lack of food.[46] The LORD responded by providing both manna and quail as well as specific instructions for gathering it. Moses and Aaron made it clear to the people that the LORD "has heard your grumbling against him."[47] Again, the people experienced the LORD's provision even when they grumbled.

Similar to the experience in Marah, the people found themselves in Rephidim with no water to drink and they quarreled with Moses.[48] They complained that Moses brought them out of Egypt "to make us and our children and our livestock die of thirst."[49] When Moses cried out to the LORD there was frustration in his voice. "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."[50] The LORD responded with specific instructions to Moses. He was to go before the people, not by himself but with some elders, take his staff and strike the rock and provide water for the people.[51] Once again the LORD provided for the people.

Finally, when Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the tablets of the Law, the people questioned where Moses was, stating, "As for this fellow Moses who brought us

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[46] Exodus 16:1-2.

[47] Exodus 16:7-8.

[48] Exodus 17:1-2.

[49] Exodus 17:3.

[50] Exodus 17:4.

[51] Exodus 17:5-6.

up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."[52] Aaron had helped them to gather earrings and cast a golden idol in the shape of a calf.[53] The LORD saw this and ordered Moses to go back down the mountain because the people "have become corrupt" and "stiff-necked."[54] Both the LORD and Moses were angry with the people of Israel and the people were punished.[55] Even though the LORD was present, the people disobeyed and ignored his presence, following their own desires.

These accounts highlight six realities about the time of transition. First, people who are being led are quick to forget both the presence and the power of the LORD in providing for their basic needs. Second, the people are quick to complain and wish for the way things had been in Egypt rather than remember and trust in the LORD's provision for the present situation as well as the future. Third, people are quick to blame leaders for the situations in which they find themselves. Fourth, leaders can and will get frustrated with the people they are called to lead. Fifth, people need leadership in the midst of transition to provide focus, direction and encouragement in order to be faithful to God. Finally, and probably most significant was the LORD's continual presence with his people and the LORD's provision for his people as they left Egypt and journeyed through the wilderness.[56]

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[52] Exodus 32:1.

[53] Exodus 32:2-3.

[54] Exodus 32:7, 9.

[55] Exodus 32:10-35.

[56] See Exodus 13:21-22; 16:1-2; 17:7

In the midst of these realities, the LORD was at work. But, the people of Israel were not rescued from slavery in the land of Egypt and delivered to the land of promise quickly. Deuteronomy 8:1-5 provides insight on why the journey took forty years.

> Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you
> may live and increase and may enter and possess the land
> the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. Remember how
> the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years,
> to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether
> or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to
> hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your
> ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone
> but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes
> did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty
> years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so
> the LORD your God disciplines you.

The period of transition was a time for Israel to be humbled, tested, and disciplined with the purpose of placing their trust in the LORD. They wandered in the desert for forty years, "not because they were lost but because the generation that had known Egypt had to die off before the Israelites could enter the Promised Land."[57] The forty years were a time of transition. William Bridges, in *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, refers to the wilderness journey of the people of Israel, stating "the outlook, attitudes, values, self-images, and ways of thinking that were functional in the past have to 'die' before people can be ready for life in the present."[58] While Moses led the people out of Egypt, the years spent in the wilderness "got Egypt out of the people."[59]

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[57] William Bridges, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 43.

[58] Bridges, 43.

[59] Bridges, 43.

Life in Egypt was all that many generations of Israelites had known. They had lived life depending on the King of Egypt. It effected the way they thought, their attitudes, their hopes, and their dreams. The transition that was experienced in the wilderness was necessary for the people of Israel. In contrast to living in dependency on Egypt, they had to learn how to live in dependence on the LORD their God. The only way to get "Egypt out of the people"[60] was to get the people out of Egypt.

Change didn't happen quickly for the people of Israel. The whole generation that lived in Egypt died off and a new generation of Israel was raised up. While the Israelites wanted change, they really didn't know what that change and subsequent transition would entail.

> The Israelites themselves prayed for a change in their situation. They were ready for a move from bondage to freedom, from being enslaved tenants in a foreign place to a land they would call their own. Like so many congregations, they at first eagerly welcomed change, but it soon became apparent that they were not at all prepared for the struggle that transition brings."[61]

Schulz rightly notes that congregations that long for change may not ready for the transition that comes with the change. It can be a time to test and humble a congregation. It can be a time of hungering and thirsting or a time of discipline. But, it is a time to see what is in people's hearts.

This experience of the people of Israel was truly a wilderness experience. It was a time in between. Alan Gripe in *The Interim Pastor's Manual* quotes two women who were pioneers as interim pastors and trainers regarding the interim time as a wilderness motif.

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[60] Bridges, 43.

[61] Schulz, 126.

> Perhaps more than any other, the biblical motif 'wilderness' emerges most strongly as the metaphor for a congregation between installed pastors. 'Wilderness' is that place of sudden freedom, uncertain leadership, changed relationships, possible deprivation – temptations, hopes, and disappointments. That place where all old fears reappear most threateningly . . . but where all the hopeful futures take on new promise. 'Wilderness' becomes a paradigm for the interim time.[62]

In the wilderness wanderings, the people of Israel experienced an interim time. The interim period began with a change in their context. They were no longer living as slaves in Egypt but experienced a new freedom with a new leader, who was called by God to lead at this crucial time.

New Testament Paradigm

In contrast to the forty-year transition which took place for the people of Israel the transition for the disciples, and other followers of Jesus, took place over the span of several hours, days and weeks. Over the course of several hours they began to deal with Jesus' betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, and death. Over the course of several days they had to deal with Jesus' resurrection. And, over the course of several weeks they experienced Jesus' presence and finally the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Not only had life changed, the disciples were struggling to deal with all the changes of life they experienced. They, too, had entered into a "wilderness" of uncertain leadership, changed relationships, and disappointments.[63]

The gospel writers provide several accounts of the various reactions and responses to the change the followers of Jesus experienced. All four gospels record Peter's immediate response to Jesus' betrayal and arrest. At Jesus' arrest, Peter drew a

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[62] Alan G. Gripe, *The Interim Pastor's Manual*, Rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press), 1997, 17.

[63] Gripe, 17.

sword and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear,[64] and after Peter denied Jesus three times[65] "he went outside and wept bitterly."[66] Matthew wrote that Judas, "seized with remorse," went to the chief priests to return his payment for betraying Jesus saying, "I have sinned, for I have betrayed innocent blood," and then went out and hanged himself.[67] Mark recorded that after Jesus' arrest, "everyone deserted him and fled."[68] Luke, in writing about the crucifixion stated, "But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things."[69] And similar to Luke, John records that there were people watching at a distance.

> Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.[70]

While there is not agreement among the Gospel writers about who was present at the crucifixion, what is clear is that there were various responses and emotions to the betrayal, arrest, trial, denial, and crucifixion of Jesus with respect to his closest followers. A major change had taken place in their lives with these events. The followers of Jesus were trying to process the inevitable changes that had taken place in their lives in such a

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[64] See Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50; and John 18:10. John is the only gospel writer who identifies this person as Peter.

[65] The accounts of Peter's three denials of Jesus are found in Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; and, John18:15-18, 25-27.

[66] Matthew 26:75c; Mark 14:72; and Luke 22:62.

[67] Matthew 27:3-5.

[68] Mark 14:50.

[69] Luke 23:49.

[70] John 19:25-27.

short time. Sheer emotion drove many of their reactions whether it was fear, anger, remorse, greed, loss, regret, grief, confusion, anxiety, despair, depression, or a combination of several of these. The disciples were in a time of transition, dealing with the inevitable changes of life.

However, the disciples were not finished experiencing and processing the inevitable changes of life. After Friday came Saturday. While the Scriptures are silent about what happened on Saturday, on Sunday there was the news of an empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus. The Gospel writers are clear that it was the women who first went to the tomb.[71] These women were "alarmed,"[72] "trembling and bewildered," and "afraid."[73] They are told to tell the disciples what has happened.[74] However, when the disciples heard that Jesus was not in the tomb they, too, had different responses. Luke notes that the disciples "did not believe the women because their words seemed like nonsense;" but Peter went to tomb to verify their story and "wondered what happened."[75] John records, "Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved," when told by Mary

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[71] The accounts of early Sunday morning are found in Matthew 28:1-10 (where there are two women who went to the tomb, "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary"); Mark 16:1-8 (where there are three women who went to the tomb, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome); Luke 24:1-8 (where Luke simply says "the women" and later identifies them as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others" in verse 9); and, John 20:1-10 (where there is one woman, Mary Magdalene).

[72] Mark 16: 5.

[73] See Mark 16:7-8. The textual note regarding the earliest manuscripts and ancient witness which did not contain any material beyond 16:8. Also, another alternative ending adds one verse rather than verses 9-20. Both possible additions have Mary reporting what she had seen to the disciples and Peter. The longer ending states that they didn't believe her (16:11), nor did they believe two to whom Jesus appeared (16:13). Jesus later "rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen." (16:14). See also, Luke 24:5.

[74] Matthew 28:10; Mark 16:7 (This account includes "But go, tell his disciples and Peter."); Luke 24:9-10; and John 20:17. (This is after Mary tells Peter and John that the Lord was taken and she didn't know where he was.)

[75] Luke 24:11-12.

Magdalene that the stone was removed, ran to the tomb and went inside.[76] The response

of the other disciple was belief, but John adds a parenthetical comment, "They still did

not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead."[77]

In addition to these responses, there were several post-resurrection appearances in

which the disciples responded in different ways. John also tells of them being gathered

behind locked doors "for fear of the Jewish leaders," but being overjoyed when Jesus

appears to them; [78] and includes the account of Thomas who would not believe without

physically seeing and feeling the wounds of Jesus.[79] John tells of Jesus meeting the

disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee after an unsuccessful night of fishing,[80] giving

them instructions which result a large catch of fish.[81] This is followed by the

reinstatement of Peter.[82] Luke, then, provides the Emmaus road story as well as another

account of Jesus appearing to the disciples which both reference the prior conversation

about the Messiah needing to suffer and rise from the dead[83] and have Jesus giving a mild

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[76] John 20:2-8.

[77] John 20:9.

[78] John 20:19.

[79] John 20:24-26 and 27-29.

[80] John 21:1-7.

[81] John 21:7.

[82] This account is found in John 21:15-17. In this narrative there are two different Greek words used for love, *agape* (self-giving, self-sacrificial love) and *phileo* (brotherly love). See Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, vol. 1, *Gospels – Acts* (Rome, Italy: Biblical Institute Press, 1974), 347-348.

[83] In the Emmaus road story the reference to suffering and rising is in verses 19, 25-26; and then later in verses 46-49.

rebuke.[84] On the Emmaus road the men's "faces were downcast," and later in the chapter they were startled, frightened, troubled, and had doubts in their minds.[85] Even after Jesus showed them his hands and feet, "they still did not believe it."[86] In contrast, Matthew before Jesus' ascension recorded, "When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted."[87]

Further, the first chapter of Acts records a passing reference to even more post-resurrections appearances of Jesus.

> After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.[88]

While the specific details of these encounters are not enumerated, it is clear that Jesus appeared to his followers over the course of forty days. In addition, Jesus gave them a command to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

These accounts of the reactions and responses of the disciples and other followers of Jesus illustrate a wide range of emotion from the change in their situation through the transition they experienced. Their emotions were a part of the transition as they continued to try to make sense of and process what was happening in their lives. It is clear that what

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[84] The rebuke in the Emmaus road story is in verse 25, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken;" and later in verse 38, "Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds?"

[85] Luke 24:17b and 37-38.

[86] Luke 24:38-41.

[87] Matthew 28:17.

[88] Acts 1:3-5.

they experienced was new and different and it was taking time for them to grasp what was happening.

Theological Reflections on Transition

While the word "transition" is not used in either the Old Testament or the New Testament the accounts of the Exodus and the time span of time between Jesus' betrayal and the day of Pentecost illustrate the realities of transition. Much like the changes in the Exodus account and in the life of Jesus' disciples which occurred in different contexts, the transitions occurred in different contexts as well. The people of Israel entered into a forty-year transition, whereas the disciples' transition was only several weeks at best. Each transition was filled with anxiety, struggle, and pain, as well as hope for the future, as the people involved had to process the changes which were brought by the inevitable movement of life's forces.

When the people of Israel left a life of slavery in Egypt, they passed from "one place to another" physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Initially there was freedom and joy, but when they faced the challenges at the Red Sea, hunger and thirst in the desert, and rebelled against Moses, they experienced anxiety, struggle, and pain. In the same way, the disciples, when confronted with the change which was brought about by the events of Jesus' life from his betrayal to the day of Pentecost, experienced anxiety, struggle and pain as well as disbelief, joy, encouragement and hope.

These two periods of transition differ in more than simply their contexts and time frames. What is significant to note is the leadership that was raised up for the people who were going through transition. In the Exodus account Moses was raised up by God to lead

the people during this time of anxiety, struggle and pain. In the Gospels Jesus was sent by God to teach and prepare the disciples for the time of transition. While absent from them for three days, from his death through his resurrection, he appeared to them repeatedly in the following weeks. The point is that the people were not left without leadership in the process of moving from change, through transition, on the journey to transformation.

Schulz makes a powerful observation about these times of transition, as well as many of the other transitions in the Scriptures where major changes take place. He states,

> These were pivot times, times of renewal, times to make a turn. These were times when God chose special leaders to guide the people in the struggle toward transformation. These leaders helped the people deal with the grief of letting go of the past. They walked the wilderness with them and reminded them of the promise of the new. When the people arrived at the threshold of the new, the leadership mantle was passed on to someone who would lead during the transformation period, usually a time that was more stable and would endure, at least until the next major change.[89]

God raised up Moses to lead the people through the transition to the land of promise. God sent Jesus Christ to bring change and raise up leaders to be world changers. These transitional leaders were present to teach and speak God's words to the people, bring words of rebuke as necessary, and point them in the right direction.

Interim pastors are transitional leaders. So too, the interim pastor's task is to partner with the people, assure them of God's presence and constancy, and guide them as they encounter transitions and the emotional processes that accompany them. While they come into a situation after a change is experienced, they are present to preach, counsel, lead, bring change where necessary, rebuke when necessary, and point a congregation in the right direction as they experience the emotions of a transition and help move people

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[89] Schulz, 123.

toward transformation. This is a critical role in which a leader is called to shepherd the people of God through a critical time in their journey of faith.

Biblical Paradigms and Theological Reflections on Transformation

"The new shape that occurs after transition"[90] is called transformation. It is the result not only of the change, but the struggle and pain that come through transition. It is only through the struggle and pain that there is a new beginning. This transformation happened at the end of the Exodus account and on the day of Pentecost.

Old Testament Paradigm

It was in the wilderness that God was present with his people. The wilderness, while a time of transition between what was and what was to come, was a time when God was actively involved with them. The people of Israel were being shaped, formed, and molded by God. This happened in their day-to-day experiences, but also at critical moments. One of the major ways this happened was by giving the people the Law on Mount Sinai. It was through the Law that the people began to learn of God's expectations for the way that they would live a life of faith and be transformed into his people. This happened not in an instant, but over time. Through their struggle they learned several realities about what it meant to be the people of God. First, they learned that God was present with them and visibly led them by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night.[91] Second, they learned that they could depend on God to provide food and

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[90] Schulz, 121.

[91] Exodus 13:21-22.

water to sustain them.[92] Third, they learned that they could depend on God to provide leadership to encourage and correct them as necessary. Fourth, they were given the Law so that they could learn how God desired them to live and act.[93] And finally, God brought them to the land of promise where they would enjoy God's blessings.

New Testament Paradigm

While the Exodus account provides for a gradual change to move into a new beginning, the new reality that confronted the followers of Jesus, first on Easter morning and then in the weeks leading up to Pentecost, occurred while they were still trying to process what had happened in the previous days and weeks. This new reality was the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit. Neither of these developments had been expected. The Gospel writers and the first two chapters of Acts therefore record a range of emotions and responses to this new reality. While the emotions, subsequent reactions, and accounts differ, Jesus' followers are responding to the same reality.

On the day of Pentecost, the followers of Jesus experienced transformation in a powerful way. There was "a sound like the blowing of a violent wind" which "filled the whole house where they were sitting."[94] In addition, "they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on them,"[95] and they were "filled with the

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[92] See Exodus 15:22-27; 16:7-8; and, 17:5-6.

[93] Exodus 20:1-17. See also, Deuteronomy 5:1-33.

[94] Acts 2:2.

[95] Acts 2:3.

Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."[96] The people who witnessed this were bewildered, amazed, and perplexed; some questioned while others "made fun of them".[97] The Spirit of God transformed these followers of Jesus. Peter, the former fisherman, preached a sermon resulting in about three thousand being added to their number that very day.[98] A fellowship of believers developed which was marked by devotion "to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."[99] In Acts 2:47 it was reported that this new fellowship not only enjoyed the favor of all the people but it grew in number each day.

This transformation in the lives of Jesus' followers happened relatively quickly. It was brought about by the work of the Spirit of God. The change the disciples experienced began with the events leading up to the death of Jesus. The transition began on Friday afternoon and continued through the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the day of Pentecost.

Theological Reflections on Transformation

The English word "transformed" is used six times in the Bible, once in the Old Testament and five times in the New Testament.[100] These six usages provide insight into the process of transformation. In the Old Testament the word is used in Job 28:5 to refer

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[96] Acts 2:4.

[97] Acts 2:6, 7, 12 and 13.

[98] Acts 2:41.

[99] Acts 2:42.

[100] Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III, eds., *The NIV Exhaustive Concordance*, s.v. "transformed," (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 1171 and 1432.

to the earth being "transformed below as by fire." The Hebrew verb *hapak*,[101] carries the

basic meaning of "turn" or "overturn" and here refers to the earth being changed or even

possibly annihilated, which is in accord with "the terrible inferno" of Job 28:5.[102]

However, this verb in other instances, though not translated "transformed," is used

frequently to describe "the miracles surrounding Israel's exodus from Egypt and her

pilgrimage in the wilderness."[103] These miracles brought a transformation, albeit short, in

the lives of Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Of the five times "transformed" is used in the New Testament, it is used once to

in Philippians 3:21 to translate the Greek verb *metaschematizo*. In this instance, it is

clearly referring to the work of Jesus Christ to "transform our lowly bodies so that they

will be like his glorious body." This transforming work is only possible because of the

power of the Lord Jesus Christ which is at work in the life of the Christian.[104] However,

the remaining four times "transformed" is used in the New Testament the Greek verb

metamorphoo is used, twice in the Gospels and twice in Paul's letters.[105] In Matthew 17:2

and Mark 9:2 it is used in the context of the transfiguration of Jesus, referring to the

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[101] George V. Wigram, *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament*, 5th ed., s.v. "*hapak*," (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 370.

[102] R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, s.v. "*hapak*," (Chicago, IL: The Moody Bible Institute, 1980), I:221. Victor P. Hamilton notes that "'annihilate' would suggest the disastrous effects of an earthquake, accompanied by lightning which ignited the natural gases of the Jordan Valley area, producing the terrible inferno."

[103] Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, 221. Hamilton in this entry notes specifically that this verb is used to refer to God's turning the Nile to blood (Exodus 7:17, 20); changing the mind of Pharaoh and his servants (Exodus 14:5); turning the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people (Psalm 105:25); turning the sea into dry land (Psalm 66:6); turning a strong west wind (Exodus 10:19) and turning Aaron's rod into a serpent (Exodus 7:15).

[104] Ralph P. Martin, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Philippians*, ed. Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black, (Grand Rapids, IL: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 149.

[105] Goodrick and Kohlenberger, III, 1171.

change in Jesus' outward appearance, whereas in Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 it points to a transformation that takes place that takes place in the lives of Christ's followers.[106]

Paul in Romans 12:2 specifically addresses the topic of transformation, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." In this verse there is a contrast between "conforming to the pattern of this world" and being "transformed by the renewing of your mind."[107] Transformation happens with the mind being renewed, or by a different way of thinking. Part of the struggle of transition is learning to think about things in a new way. This is what Paul urges here, to think in a new way and not to be conformed to the patterns that are in the world, or in an old way of doing things. F.F. Bruce, in his commentary on Romans, affirms this when he states, "Instead of living by the standards of a world at discord with God, believers are exhorted to let the renewing of their minds by the power of the Spirit transform their lives into conformity with God's will."[108] C.E.B Cranfield in his commentary on Romans concurs stating, "while this transformation is not the Christian's own doing, but the work of the Holy Spirit, they nevertheless have a real responsibility in

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[106] C.E.B. Cranfield in his commentary on Romans provides additional insight on the meaning of the verb *metamorphoo*. He notes that the verb *metamorphoo*, in referring to the transfiguration narratives in Matthew and Mark, "was not a transformation of Jesus' inward being, but rather a manifestation of the glory which throughout his earthly life was his though veiled, and, on the other hand, it was clearly a brief and fleeting manifestation." See C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2, in *The International Critical Commentary*, ed. J.A. Emerton and C.E.B. Cranfield, (Edinburg, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1979), 607.

[107] Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, vol.2, *Epistles – Apocalypse*, (Rome, Italy: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 486.

[108] F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, General Editor R.V.G. Tasker, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), 225.

the matter, to let themselves be transformed, to respond to the leading and the pressure of God's Spirit."[109] Finally, he states that this inward change "is a process which has to go on all the time the Christian is in this life."[110] It is the power of the Spirit that transformed both the people of Israel and the followers of Jesus.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul speaks about people being transformed into God's image. "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."[111] Again, this transformation is not something that can be done by an individual. It is something that is accomplished in and through the work of the Holy Spirit. Bruce states that this verse is a helpful commentary on Romans 12:2 as it speaks of the believer being "transformed into the likeness of Christ."[112] This transformation takes place as we are in the presence of the Lord. It is a process, "a gradual growth in obedience" which "takes place in response to God's presence."[113]

Several key points can be made about the work of transformation. First, it takes place in the lives of those who are followers of Jesus Christ. Second, the work that takes place inside the lives of Christians has an outward expression in the way that people live. Third, the work that takes place on the inside is the work of God through Jesus Christ and

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[109] C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2, in *The International Critical Commentary*, eds. J.A. Emerton and C.E.B. Cranfield, (Edinburg, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, Ltd., 1979), 607.

[110] Cranfield, 607.

[111] 2 Corinthians 3:18.

[112] Bruce, 226.

[113] Scott J. Hafemann, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Corinthians*, ed., Terry Muck, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 161-162.

the Holy Spirit. And finally, while it could happen immediately, it is a process that happens over time.

Conclusions

In this world, change continues to happen. Change effects not only the culture and institutions, but groups of people, and individuals as well. Change happened for the people of God in the Old and New Testaments. Change will happen in churches. It is not a question of "if" but, rather, "when." Therefore, the challenge is to have leaders who understand the dynamics in the process of change, transition, and transformation in the context of life in a faith community and to have leaders who can partner with that faith community as they seek to be faithful to God.

When the change happens, leaders are needed to help lead the congregation understand, not only the change, but the impact the change will have on the community of faith. This means understanding the context in which the change has happened, knowing the history and the health of the church, how the church has dealt with change in the past, and what type of leadership is needed. Historically, God has raised up leaders in times of change who bring special skills to lead the people in a congregation through a challenging experience.

During the transition time care needs to be exercised to lead the people well. This time of transition can be a time of confusion and fear when emotions are expressed and questions are raised. Questions and doubts can be raised about leadership. It is at this time that the interim, or transitional, leader needs to apply what has been learned about the congregation so that the people can be taught, encouraged, challenged, and led into

the new reality before them. They also need to be reminded of the ways that God has been faithful in the past and encouraged to trust God as they move into the future. In this way the leader is present to partner with the people as they walk through the transition.

Transitions can take place over a short period of time as well as a longer period of time. Whether the transition takes place over a short period of time or a longer period of time, it is a time for people to be moved toward transformation. Transformation is about possibilities, the possibility of new way of being, a new way of thinking, or a new reality. This transformation is brought about by God through the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this thesis-project is not on pastoral leadership in general. Rather, it is on the dynamics of pastoral leadership which specifically address issues of change, transition, and transformation in the life of a congregation. Even more explicitly, it is on that period of time between the departure of one installed pastor and the arrival of another installed pastor.[1] This specific window of time has been referred to as the "interim" or the "vacant pulpit."[2] As such, it is neither a time that needs to be endured, nor is it a time to simply fill the gap that exists in pastoral leaders. It is specifically a time for leadership from a pastor who understands the dynamics of change, transition, and transformation in the life and ministry of a congregation. Even more so, it is a time for leadership from a pastor who has the ability to enter into a congregation and partner with them during this critical period.

The literature that is reviewed in this chapter primarily deals with change and transition in pastoral ministry. However, there is much that can be learned from looking at change models or processes outside the church context as some of the dynamics are similar. Therefore, this review first considers two models of change, transition, and transformation from the business context. Second, the focus shifts to a specific interim model from the context of a congregation with an emphasis on identifying the various stages and processes involved in the transition. Third, the essential components or tasks

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[1] In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) an installed pastor is the term used for "a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period of for a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call." *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-2.0504a), 31.

[2] Loren B. Mead, *Critical Moment in Ministry: A Change of Pastors* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1986), 37.

to be addressed during the interim period are identified. And fourth, some final observations conclude the chapter.

Business Models

Two authors who have focused specifically on the dynamics of leadership in the context of change and transition are John Kotter and William Bridges. Kotter, a retired professor at Harvard Business School and co-founder of Kotter International, is "regarded by many as the authority on leadership and change."[3] Bridges, "has guided thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations through the maze of the transitions that accompany change."[4] The research they have done and the models of change and transition they provide give insight to both the stages of change as well as the dynamics involved in change.

Kotter's Model for Change

In 2005, Kotter published a book with Holger Rathgeber entitled *Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions.*[5] In it they tell a simple but poignant fable about penguins that have lived comfortably on the same iceberg for years. When one of the penguins discovered that the iceberg was melting, he told others but virtually no one listened. However, those who did listen formed a coalition that addressed

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[3] "Who We Are – John Kotter," Kotter International, accessed January 3, 2015, http://www.kotterinternational. com/about-us/who-we-are/john-kotter/.

[4] "Who We Are – William Bridges," William Bridges and Associates, accessed January 3, 2015, http:// wmbridges.com/about/who-bill.html.

[5] John P. Kotter and Holger Rathgeber, *Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions* (New York, NY: St. Martin's, 2006).

the issues which threatened the community and focused on dealing with the changes that needed to take place. In the midst of the story different characters respond and react in various ways to the changes taking place. The story illustrates what Kotter and Rathgeber have called an "Eight-Step Process of Successful Change" which includes creating a sense of urgency, pulling together the guiding team, developing the change vision and strategy, communicating for understanding and buy in, empowering others to act, producing short-term wins, not letting up, and creating a new culture.[6]

Along with this process for change, Kotter and Rathgeber also acknowledged that the individuals who are involved in the change process are engaged in thinking and feeling as they lead or experience change. They found that "thinking differently can help change behavior and lead to better results" but that "feeling differently can change behavior more and lead to even better results."[7] They reason that thinking includes collecting and analyzing data and then presenting it to people in a logical way to help them to change their thinking and then their behavior.[8] Further they state that creating "surprising, compelling, and if possible, visual experiences"[9] is essential to helping people change how they feel about a given situation and is more significant in changing the way that people behave.

Subsequently Kotter, in his book *Leading Change,* expanded this process based on his research with management and leadership and refined the eight steps to eight

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[6] Kotter and Rathgeber, 130-131. See Appendix B.

[7] Kotter and Rathgeber, 132-133. See Appendix C.

[8] Kotter and Rathgeber, 132-133.

[9] Kotter and Rathgeber, 132-133.

stages.[10] In this latter book, he clearly states an important principle to understand regarding the difference between management and leadership.

> The simple insight that management is not leadership is better understood today, but not nearly as well as needed. Management makes a system work. It helps you do what you what you know how to do. Leadership builds systems or transforms old ones. It takes you into territory that is new and less well known, or even completely unknown to you. This point has huge implications in an ever-faster-moving world.[11]

In the midst of change and transition both management and leadership are necessary. However, what is needed is not simple management, rather a transformation that brings the leader and those who are being led to a place that may be completely unknown.

Kotter's model of change assumes that a new leader is in the position to lead an organization forward. While it doesn't speak directly to the leadership issues of pastoral transition, it does provide some helpful concepts to consider in the midst of transition. Specifically, the importance of thinking and feeling and understanding the difference between leadership and management need to be understood by an interim leader who enters into a congregation in transition. An interim pastor needs to be aware of the way the congregation thinks and feels and guide them to do so in a healthy way as they consider both the past and the possibilities for the future. In addition, the interim pastor needs to understand the difference between management and leadership while prioritizing and engaging in the day-to-day tasks of congregational life and while helping the congregation to process the changes that have taken place and journey into a future that has the potential to be quite different from the past.

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[10] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), Table of Contents. See Appendix D. For a comparison of the Eight Step Process of Successful Change with the expanded and refined Eight-Stage Process see Appendix E.

[11] Kotter, vii.

Bridges' Model for Change

William Bridges in *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*[12] provides

a model for change that is simple but not simplistic by any evaluation. Change in

organizations is often complex and so is the transition that follows. Therefore, he begins

by clarifying the difference between change and transition.

> *Change* is situational: the move to a new site, the retirement of the
> founder, the reorganization of the roles on the team, the revisions to the
> pension plan. *Transition*, on the other hand is psychological; it is a three-
> phase process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms
> with the details of the new situation that the change brings about."[13]

While change happens, the subsequent transition as identified by Bridges is a three-phase

process that helps people to move from one reality to another. It involves letting go of the

past with its old ways and old identity, going through an in between time he calls the

"neutral zone," and emerging with a new beginning. This process is delineated in Figure

1.[14]

Figure 1: The Three-Phase Process

1. Letting go of the old ways and the old identity people had. This first phase of
   transition is an ending, and the time when you need to help people to deal with
   their losses.
2. Going through an in between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully
   operational. We call this time the "neutral zone:" it's when the critical
   psychological realignments and repatternings take place.
3. Coming out of the transition and making a new beginning. This is when people
   develop the new identity, experience the new energy, and discover the new sense
   of purpose that make the change begin to work.

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[12] William Bridges, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change.* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1991).

[13] Bridges, 3.

[14] Bridges, 4-5.

Bridges summarizes not only the process but also identifies that the psychological issues of loss, alignment, and the development of a new identity are important aspects in change and transition. So, using Bridges' terms, the departure of a pastor is the change which takes place, initiating the period of transition. This period of transition takes place over the course of time in which the congregation internalizes and comes to terms with the new situation that has begun. In addition, it is a crucial time as it is leading to a new beginning, or a transformation, for a congregation.

Bridges' identification of the "neutral zone" is a key concept to consider when thinking about an interim period in a congregation. It is precisely during this time when three different dynamics are being worked out. First, there are some in a congregation who desire to hold on tightly to the way that things were done in the past – procedures, policies, patterns of leadership and decision-making – and are not open to the possibility any changes. Second, there are some who want to minimize the change and get on with the life and ministry of the congregation as quickly as possible and not deal with the depth of the change that has taken place or the implications of that change for the future. Third, there are also some who will move at a steady pace from the changes of the past to the possibilities of the future. In each of these situations an interim pastor, who understands transition, is needed to help the various groups of people move in a healthy manner from the past into the future.

Business Principles from Kotter and Bridges

Both Bridges' and Kotter's models of change and transition, while primarily focused toward leading change in the business world, have application to the transitions

that take place in congregations. They each identify principles as well as processes that are present during transition. Churches in transition would do well to keep three of these principles in mind.

The first principle identified by both is having defined leaders or teams of leaders. For Kotter this is a guiding team, "a powerful group guiding the change – one with leadership skills, credibility, communications ability, authority, analytical skills, and a sense of urgency."[15] In contrast, Bridges focuses on the task of a specific leader to "lead change."[16] He then identifies the necessity for a leader to have a transition monitoring team, not to manage the change process but to listen and provide feedback to leaders.[17] In the midst of the departure of a pastor, leadership is needed to guide the congregation through the changes that are being encountered. This leadership is needed for the day-to-day leadership and management of the church as well as for addressing issues of pastoral care. In addition, there is a need for leadership in strategic thinking to address the transitions which the congregation, and the staff, are facing.

The second principle which they both identify is the importance of acknowledging and understanding the emotional process that is concurrent with change and transition. Kotter, with Rathgeber, specifically illustrates this through the comparison of thoughts and feelings and the role that they play for individuals and groups.[18] Bridges, also, focuses on the emotional process throughout his Three Phase Process. He notes specifically that people will have to deal with the losses they encounter. They will need

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[15] Kotter and Rathgeber, 130.

[16] Bridges, 154.

[17] Bridges, 148-150.

[18] Kotter and Rathgeber, 132.

understanding as they try to make sense of the change that has occurred and the feelings that come with it. They will need encouragement as they think through new ways to respond to their situation. And, they will have to begin to think differently about the new future which they will encounter.[19] In a congregation responses to the loss of a pastor will vary, therefore the importance of having someone to come alongside them who understands the dynamics of grief is paramount.

The third principle that is identified is partnership. This is underscored by Kotter in the utilization of guiding teams. The team guides the process of change, developing vision and strategy, as well as communicating with people and empowering them to move into the new reality. For Bridges, leaders partner with each other to communicate what is happening and to provide feedback throughout the process. It is this communication that is vital to helping the people to live into the new reality. Partnership is essential to help guide a congregation through the interim period.

These principles provide a helpful backdrop to consider the realities that encompass a congregation in transition. In addition, these principles will inform the various parts of the work that need to be addressed by the interim pastor. A strong partnership between the interim pastor, in a leadership role rather than simply in a management role, and the interim congregation, as well as the church staff, will provide a strong foundation for the transition and subsequent transformation.

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[19] Bridges, 156-157.

A Specific Interim Model

Several authors who have specific expertise regarding change and transition in congregations have written about their experiences and observations. Ralph Macy,[20] Philip Porcher,[21] Loren Mead,[22] and Roger Nicholson[23] have each made significant contributions to the literature about the dynamics and processes involved in interim ministry over a span of approximately twenty years. Collectively, their writings have formed the basis of the current interim ministry training in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In addition, to their thoughts, Peter Steinke[24] and Kenneth McFayden[25] provide some helpful reflections on the emotional processes that are at work in the midst of change, transition, and transformation.

The "interim" is a window of time that can be perceived in many different ways. Most notably, Loren Mead, in *Critical Moment of Ministry: A Change of Pastors* notes that it is a time of potential significance for a congregation. He says that what many people "generally do not recognize is that their congregation is going into a time of high

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[20] Ralph Macy, *The Interim Pastor* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1978).

[21] Philip Porcher, *What You Can Expect from an Interim Pastor and an Interim Consultant* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1980), 2.

[22] Loren B. Mead, *Critical Moment in Ministry: A Change of Pastors* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1986).

[23] Roger S. Nicholson, ed. *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1998).

[24] Peter L. Steinke, *A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2010).

[25] Kenneth J. McFayden, *Strategic Leadership for a Change: Facing Our Losses, Finding Our Future* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2009).

potential – perhaps the one time in which there is the greatest change to influence its future." [26] Mead elaborates on this thought noting the positive nature of this time period.

> During this period there is an unparalleled opportunity to engage in some developmental tasks – tasks that, if carried out well, can lead to greater health in achieving the congregation's aims and purposes.
>
> I call this a rich period precisely because this is a time in which much can be done for the long-term strengthening of the congregation. I am well aware that the church's common wisdom says that the period of the "interim," the "vacant pulpit," is an awful thing, perhaps a necessary evil but most certainly an evil.
>
> The common wisdom is just dead wrong. My own studies of this period and my observations of congregations make very clear that this can be an unusual opportunity for growth – if people will use it so. [27]

The challenge then is to help a congregation to realize that although many people may see this period as awful or evil, it can be seen and used as a time of tremendous opportunity for growth, both for individuals and for a congregation.

Consistent with Mead, Philip Porcher states that the departure of a pastor "always evokes some kind of crisis."[28] But he is quick to add that the departure of a pastor "also provides a congregation with an occasion for new opportunities in ministry. It is one time in the life of a congregation when everyone expects change, and you have the choice of being victims of change or of taking advantage of the opportunity to share in the planning of that change."[29] This window therefore gives members of a congregation the ability to make a choice. They can choose to be victims and see the time as a necessary evil

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[26] Mead, 2.

[27] Mead, 37.

[28] Porcher, 2.

[29] Porcher, 2.

between pastors. Or, they can make the most of the opportunity to be actively engaged in the life of the congregation at this critical juncture in their life together.

Stages of an Interim

Roger Nicholson, Loren Mead, and Ralph Macy identify the stages through which congregations travel from one installed pastor to another. Mead identifies seven stages,[30] Nicholson identifies a total of eight stages,[31] and Macy identifies six stages.[32] These stages include termination, direction finding, self-study, search, negotiation, decision, installation, and start up.[33] The stages identified by the different authors are quite similar, if not in many cases identical. For the sake of clarity, these different stages as identified by Mead, Nicholson and Macy merit some brief explanation.

The first stage is termination. Nicholson states that "the journey begins with termination"[34] and "is a time of farewell, with all the accompanying emotions of separation and uncertainty."[35] Termination refers to the announcement of and the departure of the installed pastor. Mead notes that the termination "can be happy or sad, loving or angry, long-expected or sudden."[36] Macy adds that the reason for the departure or termination "may range from a retirement announced years in advance to an overnight

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[30] Mead, 17-35.

[31] Nicholson, 5-6.

[32] Macy, 4-5.

[33] See Appendix F for a comparison of the stages suggested by Mead, Nicholson and Macy.

[34] Nicholson, 5.

[35] Nicholson, 5.

[36] Mead, 17-18.

departure."[37] Whatever the reason for the termination, it is the beginning of a major change which also initiates an emotional process for a congregation.

The second stage involves direction finding. Macy asserts that this time is "a time of shifting power and authority"[38] as the congregation determines the way forward. According to Nicholson, it is a time of learning, and in some cases reviewing, "the steps to be taken before a new pastor will be called. Consultation with denominational leaders will outline the process and help secure interim leadership for the journey. The purpose of direction finding is to reduce anxiety and reassure the congregation that all will be well."[39] Mead notes that "confusion and panic are the inevitable results when the pastor announces that she or he has accepted a call or appointment elsewhere," and that denominational officials can provide the necessary information about the recommended procedures to follow.[40]

The third stage is self-study. It is a time for the congregation to understand, identify, and assess "who and what it is and what it needs to be in the future."[41] According to Nicholson, "this should be an unhurried process of the congregation looking at itself, gathering data, and preparing a parish description to share with prospective candidates. It is a careful and deliberate process of evaluation"[42] as it begins

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[37] Macy, 4.

[38] Macy, 4.

[39] Nicholson, 5.

[40] Mead, 20-21.

[41] Mead, 22.

[42] Nicholson, 5.

to consider "what kind of leadership it wants."[43] However this period of self-study needs to include not only an emphasis of looking at the church itself, but also looking at the context in which it ministers.

The fourth stage is the search for the new pastor. This stage is informed by the self-study. Typically there is a committee of the congregation formed that spends many hours sorting through the materials that it receives regarding candidates to fill the pastoral position. The data received can come to the committee "from all sorts of sources."[44] The committee will then decide which of the potential candidates they would like to interview either by phone or in person. Ultimately, the selection process needs to be "based on the congregation's perception of its identity and mission."[45]

The stages begin to differ at this point.[46] Mead and Macy combine decision and negotiation while Nicholson treats them separately. These stages, while distinct, are similar as the decision regarding a candidate involves the negotiation of terms of call (salary and housing, vacation, continuing education, professional expenses, etc.). The stage of decision is the point at which "a candidate is presented and the congregation decides whether or not to extend a call."[47] This is then followed by negotiation in which

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[43] Macy, 4.

[44] Mead, 26.

[45] Macy, 4.

[46] See Appendix F for a comparison of the "Stages of an Interim Period."

[47] Nicholson, 6.

"both parties agree about key issues"[48] and "finalize the details of salary, benefits, and a starting date."[49]

Similarly to the combination of decision and negotiation, Macy combines installation and start-up, while Mead and Nicholson keep both separate. Again, while they are distinct, there is a similarity to these stages as well. Installation and start-up signify a new beginning. In some congregations start-up happens and installation is put off for weeks and even months later. In other congregations installation takes place as soon as possible. Mead defines installation well as "an event having to do with a congregation's entry into a new phase of is life and ministry. It is also a statement of hope about what that life is to be and a statement of invitation to others to be with them in their journey."[50]

The final stage is the start-up. "It is the official beginning of a new pastorate and of a new chapter in the congregation's life."[51] Mead sees this time as "absolutely critical for the quality of the entire pastorate, whether it is to last for three or four years, or for two or three decades. The patterns that get established in the first twelve to eighteen months are likely to rule the pastor and congregation for as long as that pastor and that congregation are related."[52]

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[48] Mead, 29.

[49] Nicholson, 6.

[50] Mead, 31.

[51] Nicholson, 6.

[52] Mead, 32.

These stages are not unlike the processes delineated by Kotter and Bridges.[53] While Kotter and Bridges give compelling and helpful overviews of the process of change and transition, Mead, Macy, and Nicholson identify the specific stages of change and transition within a congregation that is experiencing the change of pastoral leadership. At a critical juncture like the change initiated by the departure of a pastor both Kotter and Bridges would be in agreement with Mead, Macy, and Nicholson at several points. They would agree that leadership is crucial to help a congregation not be victims of change but to make the most of the situation by addressing the change that has taken place. They would agree that the emotional process is at play in the midst of any form of transition and in the various stages that take place from the initial change through transition to transformation. And, they would also agree that partnership between the leader and the group being led are important to successfully navigating the process from beginning to end.

While these stages are fairly straight forward to understand, there are several considerations which need to be taken into account. First, although these stages give a good understanding of what needs to happen during the interim period, these stages are not always communicated clearly to the congregation that has entered into an interim period. Even if these stages are communicated they may not be understood or heard as the congregation's level of anxiety may be extremely high. Therefore, these stages need to be communicated clearly and often to provide the congregation the opportunity to understand what is being experienced. Second, the interim pastor is typically not on site during the termination stage so the burden to communicate this process is on the

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[53] See Appendix G, "An Analysis of the Five Models," to see how the aforementioned stages overlap and fit within the processes outlined by Kotter and Bridges.

departing pastor, a representative of session, or a representative of the presbytery. Third, these steps assume new pastoral leadership for a congregation. However, depending on the size, situation, and ministry context of the congregation, it may not be feasible to hire another pastor. In this sense "all may not be well" as suggested by Nicholson. There may be difficult decisions that will have to be made about the viability of a congregation. And fourth, while not belaboring the time involved in accomplishing these steps, it doesn't serve the purposes of the congregation or the future pastor to rush through these steps. An appropriate amount of time, energy, and diligence is needed to complete them well.

Process Tasks and Developmental Tasks

Having established the process of change and transition, and the stages that need to take place, attention needs to be focused on the specific tasks which need to be addressed in the pastoral transition. Specifically, there are two sets of tasks that have been identified and need to be addressed during the interim. The first set of tasks is referred to as the Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor. The second set of tasks is referred to as the Developmental Tasks of the Congregation.

The Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor

There are five Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor. David R. Sawyer, an interim pastor and church consultant, identified these five tasks "that are the unique and individual responsibility of the interim pastor."[54] These tasks include: "joining the system, analyzing the organization as a system, connecting with the denomination,

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[54] Gripe, *The Interim Pastor's Manual*. Rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1997), 51. See also Appendix H.

focusing on and assuming responsibility, and exiting and evaluating."[55] Gripe agrees with Sawyer and states, "These process tasks are helpful ways to understand and organize the tasks that are the particular responsibility of the interim pastor and are not to be confused with what may be called the programs tasks of the interim pastor (such things as preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and leadership development)."[56] While these tasks are critical to providing leadership to the congregation through this important time, they are not necessarily sequential. Rather, they are dynamic as the interim pastor exercises leadership and learns about the congregation and its ministry.

The first process task is joining the system. A congregation can be compared to the human body. It is "a system which behaves as though it were an organism with a life of its own, with its own internal interconnectedness, multiple contexts, structures and stories," according to Sawyer.[57] The task of the interim pastor is to come into a congregation and join it. This means making connections with people wherever and however possible. It will involve learning about customs, traditions, expectations; learning how the congregation conducts their business and worship; and, learning how the congregation interacts with each other internally in the church and externally in the community. The goal is to quickly become a part of the congregation but also to be able to maintain objectivity in the process.

The second process task of the interim pastor is to analyze the organization as a system. Gripe cites the work of Edwin Friedman[58] on family systems theory and his

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[55] Gripe, 51.

[56] Gripe, 51.

[57] Gripe, 52.

[58] Gripe, 53-54.

comparison of a congregation to a family as well as the work of Kenneth R. Mitchell[59]

and his practical application of the theory to the workings of pastoral staff in multiple

staff situations. Mitchell distills his work into five basic principles[60] which are

summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Five Basic Principles of Systems

1. Systems regularly act to preserve themselves and to resist change.
2. Systems maintain both external and internal boundaries.
3. Systems are always internally interconnected.
4. Systems assign specialized roles to their members.
5. Systems develop rules and rituals in order to bond members to one another and thus to maintain and preserve the group.

Gripe takes this information on systems and specifically applies it to the life of a

congregation. He states that there are

> two elements: the organization and the system. Organization here refers to the structure of the congregation and its various parts, such as boards, fellowship groups, couples' clubs, choir, and church school. System describes the way those parts work together, work against one another, or just tolerate one another.[61]

While organizational charts of employees and ministries may give a sense of how a

ministry is organized, it is also important to be on the lookout for systemic issues such as

anxiety among leaders, dependence and independence in relationships, strengths and

weakness of congregational leaders, spiritual and emotional health, conflict and how it is

handled, unresolved issues, power, boundaries, and secrets.[62] This kind of information

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[59] Gripe, 54.

[60] Gripe, 54.

[61] Gripe, 54-55.

[62] Gripe, 55-56.

will be helpful to an interim pastor as he or she seeks to understand a congregation's dynamics. As such, it will continue to change as an interim pastor learns about and experiences life in a particular congregation.

The third process task is connecting with the denomination. In a denomination like the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) this is a key step as a particular congregation is a member of a presbytery.[63] The presbytery, to which a congregation belongs, plays an integral part in the call process for a teaching elder or pastor. Not only do churches belong to a presbytery, pastors do as well. It is through a presbytery's Committee on Ministry that pastors must be approved to work in particular congregations.[64] In addition, because presbyteries are charged with the responsibilities to "provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard; provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received;" and "nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ,"[65] there is the need for a good relationship and good communication between the interim pastor and the presbytery.

Gripe notes that it is typical for an interim pastor to "join the presbytery in which he or she is in interim service."[66] As a member of a presbytery an interim pastor is expected to take part in the deliberations of that presbytery at its meetings as well as to serve on a committee or in some other way. In doing this he or she demonstrates the

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[63] *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-3.0301), 50-52.

[64] *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-3.0301), 50-52 and (G-3.0307), 54.

[65] *Book of Order, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-3.0301a-c), 51-52.

[66] Gripe, 56.

partnership that is intended between a pastor and the presbytery as well as a congregation and a presbytery.

In addition, regular communication should take place between the interim pastor and the executive presbyter, as well as, the Committee on Ministry.[67] This may include progress reports or meetings at various intervals in order to keep abreast of the progress that is being made in the work with a congregation or to discuss possible problems that may be discovered in the life and ministry of a congregation. Depending on the needs of the interim pastor or the congregation, the presbytery, through its executive presbyter or Committee on Ministry, may have resources that will be helpful for the interim pastor and the congregation. Since the goal of this third process task is to encourage the congregation to connect with the denomination, there is an opportunity for the interim pastor to model and facilitate a healthy relationship with the denomination which will hopefully have a positive effect on the congregation.

The fourth process task is focusing and assuming responsibility. The interim pastor enters into the process tasks to discover as much as possible about the congregation he or she is serving. The information that is gathered then guides the interim pastor to "decide where to focus and how much responsibility to assume in this interim."[68] In addition, this will help the interim pastor with setting priorities and goals for the ministry, both personally, and with the session for the congregation.

Gripe identifies issues and needs that are common for an interim pastor to uncover in the course of his or her ministry. These include clarifying leadership roles and structures, empowering lay leaders, furthering spiritual renewal, improving

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[67] Gripe, 56.

[68] Gripe, 57.

administrative practices, promoting healing from grief, and reconciling after conflict.[69]

While these issues and needs may be common, they each occur in a specific context.

There may be other needs as well based on the unique history of each congregation.

Addressing these issues and needs depends on the ability to make a clear assessment.

According to Gripe, certain factors will guide the focus of the interim period once a clear

assessment is made. These factors are dependent on the ability and skill of the interim to

identify them, and skillfully work within the existing system to gain the support of

leaders of the congregation to deal with the assessment that is given. The factors that will

guide and focus the interim period are referenced are in Figure 3.[70] While a significant

Figure 3: Factors Which Will Guide and Focus the Interim Period

The interim's particular experience and skill.
The interim's understanding and evaluation of the data gathered.
The interim's understanding of what are appropriate roles and responsibilities
    in this situation, both for the interim and for others in the system.
The degree of openness in the system to each of the issues or activities that the
    interim has identified as worthy of attention.
The ability of the interim to get the agreement and support of other responsible
    leaders in the congregation, the presbytery, and other parts of the system.
The interim's own understanding of where God is leading in this particular
    situation.

portion of the analysis of the situation belongs to the interim, it should be noted that the

data gathered is provided by both the congregation and the presbytery. The work to be

done requires partnership. Through the gathering of data, the analysis, and the setting of

priorities and goals, the interim pastor works in partnership with others – the session, the

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[69] Gripe, 57-58.

[70] Gripe, 57.

presbytery, and the congregation. This fourth step is crucial to helping a congregation to move forward in ministry.

The fifth process task is exiting and evaluating. Exiting is a major part of the interim experience. The goal is for the interim pastor to help a congregation be prepared to welcome its new pastor. For that to happen, the interim needs to leave well. Gripe states there are "five categories of exiting that belong solely to the interim: (1) the interim's person-to-person relationships, (2) the interim's relationships to the whole 'system' that is this church family, (3) contract termination, (4) evaluation, and (5) making a clean break."[71] While these appear to be straightforward, they each help to bring an end to the interim period and should not be overlooked.

Because relationships have been made with different people in the life of the congregation, appropriate "good-bye's" need to be said. This will include staff members, people who were cared for in crisis, members of the presbytery, and leaders in the community. Boards, committees, task forces, and organizations of which the interim pastor was a member need to be wished farewell. These various structures may have been boards or committees in a particular congregation or at the presbytery level. There is also a possibility that the interim pastor was on a committee or board of a community organization. As the interim pastor exits, he or she should make it a priority not to overlook the relationships in which he or she was involved and take the opportunity to say farewell.

The contract which was entered into at the beginning of the interim period needs to be honored according to its terms at the end of the interim period. The agreements and stipulations made by the interim pastor and the congregation regarding service,

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[71] Gripe, 58.

remuneration, various allowances, and exit timelines that were made were established for the health and welfare of both the church and the interim pastor. It is the responsibility of the interim pastor to clearly lead with integrity at this point.

Evaluations need to be conducted with a specific focus upon the priorities, goals and work of the interim contract or agreement. Both the interim pastor and the congregation need to assess the work that has been completed as well as the work that has not been completed. It is the responsibility of the congregation to continue to engage in the work that has not yet been completed. An assessment of what the congregation has learned and what the interim pastor has learned in the experience will help guide toward positive closure. In addition, it is helpful to assess the manner in which the work was completed.

And finally the interim pastor needs to leave so that the new pastor can be welcomed as he or she begins ministry with the congregation. Lingering or maintaining pastoral contact with the congregation may be detrimental to a new pastor. Therefore, it is necessary for the interim pastor to make a clean break.

These Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor, which have been delineated, are considered to be essential in leading a congregation from change, through transition and toward transformation. Foundational to these tasks are the concepts identified by Kotter and Bridges who would underscore that the process needs a leader to guide the journey through transition toward transformation rather than simply someone to manage a process.[72] Second, their focus on the emotional process is a key concept of which the interim pastor needs to be aware and navigate as he or she joins the system, analyzes the system, and exits and evaluates the experience. And third, their focus on partnership is an

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[72] Kotter, vii and Bridges, 148-150.

integral part of joining the system, connecting with the denomination and exiting and evaluating the experience.

The way in which these tasks are addressed is as important, or even more important, as the tasks themselves. At stake is not only the role of the interim pastor, but the spiritual health, vitality, and future of the congregation being served. With this in mind, there are several concerns which these tasks raise. First, it is helpful to communicate what these tasks are to the congregation and it's leadership so that they have a clear sense of what the interim pastor's role and responsibilities are during the interim period. In addition to knowing the "what," they also deserve to know the reasons for these tasks in the overall interim period. Second, the interim pastor cannot simply "go thru the motions" in the completion of these tasks. There is a need to care for and lead the people of the congregation who have entered into a difficult and potentially powerful period in the life of their church. As the interim pastor "joins the system" and "analyzes the system" he or she must remember that the people are traveling thru "the neutral zone," a time "when critical psychological realignments and repatternings take place."[73] The people of the congregation and its leadership teams are not a project, but people who need to be led. Third, while the relationship with the governing body – the presbytery – is important and necessary in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the needs of the congregation are of primary importance during the interim period. The presbytery exists to serve the congregation as it seeks to minister in the local community. And finally, there is a critical need not only to "join the system" on the congregational level, but as a staff member as well. While the congregation is experiencing change and transition, the staff also is experiencing change and transition. As the interim pastor analyzes the system

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[73] Bridges, 5.

of the congregation, an integral and related part is the staff of the church. They need to be led and cared for during this interim period as well.

The Developmental Tasks of the Congregation

In addition to the five Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor there are five Developmental Tasks of the Congregation. These are addressed at length by Mead,[74] Nicholson,[75] and Gripe.[76] These tasks are identified as critical for a congregation which is going through an interim period. While Mead, Nicholson, Gripe use slightly different names for these names for these five tasks, but they can be summarized as follows: coming to terms with history, discovering a new identity, making leadership changes, renewing denominational linkages, and committing to new directions in ministry.[77] These tasks were identified in the mid-1970s by Loren Mead during a meeting of interim pastors and church leaders which was convened in St. Louis by the Alban Institute.[78] Each of these five tasks deal with specific facets of the interim time. Like the Process Tasks they are not necessarily sequential, however these tasks are clearly the work of the congregation. More specifically, these tasks have been defined to help a congregation to move through the stages between the departure of one installed pastor to the arrival of the next installed pastor.

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[74] Mead, 36-50.

[75] Nicholson, 6-12.

[76] Gripe, 38-50.

[77] See Appendix H.

[78] Gripe, 39.

The first developmental task addresses specifically the circumstances around the departure of the installed pastor. That departure, whether a planned retirement, a new call, a dismissal due to misconduct, or any other reason, will have circumstances which are unique to each context. Coming to terms with history will give space and time to deal with these circumstances whether they are positive or negative or, possibly, a little of both. In addition, this first task is designed to help the congregation take a look at its history and identify some of the major factors that have shaped its ministry and its experience. By its very nature, this task may bring to the surface a full range of emotion from grief to elation.

Mead states, "There are positive as well as negative dimensions of what history means to a congregation."[79] This first task allows a congregation the opportunity to look at these various dimensions and to "wrestle with its story, its history, its identity"[80] in an attempt to understand who they have been and what if anything they might like to continue or change as they move into the future.

Looking at the history of a congregation is not always an easy task. It is not unusual for emotions to be evoked. Kenneth J. McFayden in *Strategic Leadership for a Change: Facing Our Losses, Finding Our Future*, while not addressing interim ministry specifically, focuses on the impact of change within congregations. He identifies the impact by looking at the losses that a congregation endures as well as the pain that comes with loss.[81] Both the loss and the pain are part of coming to terms with history. It is

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[79] Mead, 38.

[80] Mead, 39.

[81] McFayden, 21-64.

important to note that these emotions may arise during the various stages of the interim period. As such, a skilled interim pastor needs to be alert to the emotional temperature of the congregation.

The second developmental task arises out of the first. After addressing various aspects of their history, a congregation needs to discover its new identity. This new identity is one that is unique to the congregation. Gripe specifically explains why this is a crucial task.

> Congregations often describe their history in terms of the pastors who served them. This common reality has significant implications. First, when the pastor leaves, whatever the reason for the departure, such a church has lost its focal point and may be both confused and despondent. Members of the congregation need to be led to understand that their identity as a church is not tied to any one human being but includes everyone who is a part of the church family. The pastor is only a part of their history. It is not Jesus Christ who has left the church, just the former pastor. The interim will want to be sensitive and considerate about when and how to make such statements, especially while the congregation is still mourning their loss. In such cases, finding a new identity is especially critical. Otherwise the congregation may sink into depression.[82]

This underscores the reality and impact of the former pastor's ministry, but more importantly identifies that the foundation of the church's identity and ministry is on Jesus Christ. A pastor may have left, but Jesus Christ has not.

Nicholson, in reflecting on the task of discovering a new identity, states, "Congregations tend to think that they do not change over time."[83] But there are changes that take place in the life of a congregation such as pastoral and lay leadership, births, deaths, and transfers of membership, to name a few. While there are these internal changes which happen in the life and ministry of a congregation, there are external

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[82] Gripe, 43.

[83] Nicholson, 8.

changes as well such as changing demographics, changing economic factors, changing neighborhoods, and changing needs in the community. In light of the changes that take place over time both Nicholson and Gripe note the importance of a self-study of a congregation. Nicholson says, "A self-study process can help focus a congregation's identity, resulting in a picture based on reality and not on fond remembrances of past experience."[84] Gripe expands on that including the importance of the context of the congregation stating, "The self-study offers a well-defined opportunity for the congregation to look not only at itself but at the challenges of the community it serves."[85]

The second developmental task of discovering a new identity includes both a look internally and externally. Internally, the congregation needs to identify who they are, their mission and vision, their strategy, and their strengths and weaknesses. Externally, the congregation needs to consider its context in the wider community in which it exists. This will include needs in the community and how the community views the congregation. Both aspects form an important part of this task. It has been found that this task "energizes the congregation, enhances the healing process, and builds excitement and anticipation for the future."[86]

The third developmental task focuses specifically on leadership changes during the interim. While Mead refers to this step as "Allowing Needed Leadership Change,"[87] and Nicholson calls it "Leadership Changes during an Interim,"[88] Gripe identifies this

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[84] Nicholson, 9.

[85] Gripe, 44.

[86] Nicholson, 9.

[87] Mead, 45.

[88] Nicholson, 9.

task as "Allowing and Empowering New Leaders."[89] All three note that changes will take place in leadership, but Gripe allows for and even suggests that other leadership changes will be necessary.

During the tenure of an installed pastor, there will be people who are "attracted to work with her or him and naturally gravitate into leadership of various activities within the congregation."[90] As this happens the pastor and the people will exercise power in different ways. Gripe cites Roy Oswald, "an author, trainer, and consultant with the Alban Institute"[91] who "suggests that there are at least four power 'currencies' in a church: structural, reputational, coalitional, and communicational"[92] as noted in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Power 'Currencies'

Structural power – Comes from holding an official position in the congregation or perhaps from some unofficial yet influential position in the organization.
Reputational power – Comes from the image a person has in the church, usually as a result of past accomplishments, social position, or family connections; it may also be derived from personal talents or gifts.
Coalitional power – Develops when one person unites with others of like purposes and interests to achieve common goals.
Communicational power – Held by people who have information and know when and how to share it effectively.

Understanding each of these different types of power and how they are at work in the life and ministry of a congregation are important not only for the interim pastor but for the

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[89] Gripe, 44.

[90] Mead, 45.

[91] Gripe, 45.

[92] Gripe, 45.

leaders of a congregation as they consider future directions and the leaders who will be allowed and empowered to serve.

According to Nicholson, "a change of pastors provides a chance for new people to step forward in leadership roles."[93] This may take place naturally, "but in conflicted and struggling congregations, such adjustments of leadership may well become power struggles."[94] The interim pastor has a powerful opportunity to help those in leadership address these issues. If this doesn't happen the effects may be experienced for many years to come. Mead in his final statement on this third task makes this point, "A congregation that leaps through the change of pastors without working on this developmental task misses an important possibility for growth."[95]

The fourth developmental task is renewing denominational linkages. It is not uncommon for a congregation to have "little or no relationship to the denomination."[96] This may be for several reasons. It may be because the congregation has had no need of resources that are available from the denomination or it may be because of an historical issue which has caused the congregation and the denomination to be estranged. In addition, it may be that the former pastor had a negative view of the denomination and communicated that to the congregation. Despite the reason, it is specifically during the interim that this relationship has the possibility to be enhanced. The denomination will often have resources to help guide a congregation through an interim period, such as a self-study, long-range planning and conflict resolution materials, as well as resources to

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[93] Nicholson, 10.

[94] Nicholson, 10.

[95] Mead, 47.

[96] Mead, 47.

help in various areas of ministry like leadership training, stewardship, and Christian Education.[97] But, it is the responsibility of both the denomination and the congregation to work toward renewing a vital relationship in mission and ministry. Even if the denomination and the congregation have grown apart over the years, this is the time to explore the relationship and determine the future nature of the relationship.

The fifth, and final, developmental task is a commitment to new directions in ministry. Gripe asserts "the congregation has finished its interim developmental tasks only when it is genuinely ready to make a commitment to new leadership and a new future."[98] When a congregation has come to terms with its history, developed a new identity, allowed and empowered new leadership, and renewed denominational linkages it can move forward. In fact, this is the reason to move through the tasks deliberately and thoughtfully. A congregation that doesn't see the value of attending to the developmental tasks and desires to jump ahead to this fifth task without giving time and thought to the work which needs to be completed may well have a difficult time committing to new leadership and a new future.

Even when a congregation has worked through the developmental tasks, there is still one task that needs to be completed. It needs to say "good-bye" to the interim pastor. A congregation cannot say "hello" to its new pastor if it has not said "good-bye" to the interim pastor (and all previous pastors for that matter).[99] It is appropriate and necessary for a congregation to have a farewell reception for an interim pastor to celebrate the work that has been completed and to be poised for the new installed pastor.

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[97] Nicholson, 11.

[98] Gripe, 49.

[99] Gripe, 49.

These Developmental Tasks of the Congregation are tasks designed to help a congregation move from change, the departure of the pastor, through transition, and into transformation, a new beginning. Some of the work in these tasks will continue on when new pastor arrives, such as leadership changes and growing into a new identity. But the congregation that commits to work diligently on these tasks will find it is better poised to journey into the future. There will be some in the congregation that lag behind holding on to the past and choose not to move forward. Conversely, there will be some who want to race ahead and not complete the work of grief. The challenge for the interim pastor and the leaders of the congregation is to begin the work and continue to move forward, trusting God that they have a future ministry ahead.

Again, the concepts identified by Kotter and Bridges are foundational to the Developmental Tasks of the Congregation. First, an interim pastor must communicate the tasks to the congregation and must give leadership to assure that they are completed. Second, the emotional process is engaged during each of these tasks and the interim pastor needs not only to understand the emotional process but guide the congregation through it. Different members of the leadership team or the congregation may be effected by any of the tasks whether it is coming to terms with history, discovering a new identity, making leadership changes, renewing denominational linkages, or committing to a new direction in ministry. And third, the focus on partnership is necessary for communication, feedback, vision, and strategy. Each of these underscore the importance of having an interim pastor who understands the dynamics of leading people from change, through transition, to transformation.

These five Developmental Tasks of the Congregation are helpful in guiding a congregation through "the neutral zone"[100] of the interim period. These tasks in some ways outline the work that needs to take place. It may be that not all of the tasks need or deserve an equal amount of time or energy, however they each must receive thoughtful attention. In addition, these tasks may not adequately address the issues facing any single congregation as they experience the rapid pace of change in the culture and the church. While the desire may be to skip the initial tasks and to get on with finding a new pastor, the hard work done in understanding and coming to terms with history and discovering a new identity are essential to helping a congregation move forward. As in the Process Tasks, the relationship with the governing body deserves attention, but should not be an impediment to the ministry and mission of the congregation in the community.

Some Final Thoughts

This literature review has noted different models of change and transition which lead to transformation, most specifically from the point of view of business and interim ministry in congregations. Each model has been designed for the specific context in which it will be used. Therefore a business model is best suited for a business context and an interim ministry model is best suited for congregations in interim periods. While there are principles and dynamics involved in change, transition, and transformation which are similar in these models, there are also some significant differences that have been noted. Most significant is the context for such change and transition. The congregation can learn from the business context as well as from the work that has been done in congregations. While each context may focus on different stages, congregations in particular will benefit

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[100] Bridges, 5.

from knowing and understanding the stages and the tasks – both process tasks and developmental tasks – which are meant to guide them through the change, transition, and on to the transformation.

Brigdes' model for change and the Three-Phase Process of transition with "an ending," the "neutral zone," and the "new beginning" provides a concept which can be translated well to a congregation that is in an interim period.[101] When used with the Old Testament paradigm of the Exodus story or the New Testament paradigm of the time from Jesus Christ's betrayal and death through Pentecost it illustrates a framework for a congregation to understand their experience in the interim period. It is within this context that the stages and the tasks of the interim period can be explained in a logical and illustrative manner. However, the challenge still exists to help the congregation understand that the stages and tasks are not simply a process to endure to acquire a new pastor for their congregation. The stages and tasks are designed ultimately to aid in the process of transformation – something that God does.

The question remains as to whether an interim pastor is willing to partner in this transition time with a congregation and whether a congregation is willing to enter into a potentially uncomfortable period of time with an interim pastor. The purpose is not simply to endure the interim period and eventually hire a new pastor. The purpose of this partnership is to allow God to be at work in and through the congregation and its leaders in a way which will bring transformation.

Therefore, the person who enters into role of interim pastor must be willing to be open to what God desires for that congregation as well. The interim pastor must be willing to take the time to get to know the congregation. He or she cannot be content

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[101] Bridges, 4-5.

simply to go through the stages and accomplish the tasks of interim ministry. Nor is it enough to be content to manage a process in the life of a congregation. An interim pastor must communicate well and lead the people into the new reality of what God desires for them. It means partnering with the congregation and its leaders to help them desire the transformation which only God can bring.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT FORMUALTION AND RESULTS

This project has been designed to explore the interim concepts of change, transition, and transformation. Understanding the impact of each of these concepts, and the dynamics at work in them, is crucial to establishing a working partnership between an interim congregation and an interim pastor. The goal is to assess if from change, through transition, to transformation there is a critical partnership which exists between a congregation, it's leadership, and it's interim pastor. In order to test this hypothesis a survey was developed to ascertain data regarding this partnership. Therefore, this chapter will be arranged according to the data on the survey.

First there is a description of the survey design. Second, there is a brief overview of how the churches were selected. Third, the results from each of the three sections of the survey will be analyzed. The data from Section 1: Demographic Information provides a brief description of each of the churches which participated in the survey. The data from Section 2: Interim Tasks focuses on the Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor and the Developmental Tasks of the Congregation. And, the information from Section 3: Partnership Information accesses the perception of a partnership between the congregation and the interim pastor, as well as, the elders and the interim pastor. Fourth, the survey will be critiqued. And finally, conclusions will be drawn.

The Survey Design

The survey, which is contained in Appendix J, was developed to be used specifically for ruling elders serving in congregations of the Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.) that were in various stages of the interim process. Ruling elders have the responsibility to lead and oversee all the ministries of a particular congregation.[1] In addition, they are the ones who are to work closely with an interim pastor in accomplishing the interim work and thus preparing a congregation for its new pastor. The previous research cited in Chapter One entitled "A Study of the Effectiveness of Interim Pastors" surveyed presbytery executives, chairpersons of presbytery committees on ministry, clerks of sessions in congregations which had an interim pastor and pastors who followed an interim pastor, but not the ruling elders who served with the interim pastor.[2] This survey was designed as an attempt at gaining feedback from these local leaders in congregations. The desire was to learn about the context of each particular congregation, the interim leadership exercised in each congregation during the interim, and the perceived partnership with the interim pastor. Therefore, the survey was developed in three sections.

The first section was designed to obtain basic demographic information on the particular congregations from each respective session.[3] This included the size of the congregation and the average worship attendance in the past year, the type of community in which the church ministers, the ethnic composition of the congregation, the amount of the annual operating budget, the number of ruling elders that currently serve on the

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[1] *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-2.0301), 27.

[2] Research Services, *"A Study of the Effectiveness of Interim Pastors,"* in A Report from Research Services of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), September 11, 2007), accessed May 24, 2015, https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/ministersinterim-pastors/.

[3] In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the term "session" refers to the governing council of a local congregation. It is "composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors" of a particular congregation. See *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-3.0201), 48.

session, and the number of pastors that serve the congregation. Each of these questions (one through seven) dealt with the specific context of each congregation. In addition to this information, questions were asked regarding the time frame since the change of leadership and the tenure of an interim pastor. These latter questions (eight through eleven) provided a time frame regarding the change experienced by the congregation and its leadership.

The second section focused on the interim tasks, the Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor and the Developmental Tasks of the Congregation. The desire was two-fold: first, to determine if the interim tasks were being or had been completed (questions twelve a-e and fourteen a-e); and, second to determine if the interim tasks had been explained to the session (questions thirteen and fifteen). The questions in this section were designed to provide descriptive information of the interim tasks to provide both education about the tasks and clarity for the respondents to understand what the different tasks entailed. The use of the Likert Scale gave the respondents the opportunity to express their degree of agreement or disagreement on a spectrum with the following choice of responses: "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," or "Strongly Agree."

The third section focused on partnership in the interim process. The desire was to measure if anxiety was perceived to be present in the congregation and the session when the pastor announced that he or she was leaving (question sixteen) and to determine if that anxiety lessened (question seventeen) during the interim period. In addition, the final questions (questions eighteen through twenty) sought to measure if there was a perceived working partnership between the interim pastor and the congregation as well as the

session. The Likert Scale was again used to measure the degree the respondents'

agreement or disagreement with each statement.

The Selection of Churches in the Survey

In order to select the churches in the study, the researcher contacted the Associate

General Presbyter/Head-of-Staff for Mission Presbytery, the Rev. Ruben Armendariz for

suggestions. Rev. Armendariz directed the researcher to contact the Rev. Diana Whitley,

a member of the Committee on Ministry, who specifically oversees churches in the

interim process. A phone conversation provided a list of nine congregations in the

presbytery that were currently in various stages of the interim process. The researcher

independently chose five congregations of various sizes and locales and contacted the

moderators of those sessions by phone to determine if they would ask the ruling elders

for permission to participate in the survey. Each moderator agreed to ask his or her

respective session. After the moderators agreed to ask the sessions, a packet of surveys

was mailed to each moderator.[4] Each of the five sessions, when asked, agreed to

participate in the survey. The surveys, when received, were passed out and administered

by the moderators to all the session members who were present and willing to participate.

After the surveys were completed the respective moderators mailed them back to the

researcher over a three-month period of time, from mid-December 2014 through mid-

March 2015. A total of sixty-five surveys were returned.

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[4] The number of surveys mailed was sufficient for the number of elders on each session, teaching elders
and ruling elders, plus a few extra in case mistakes were made. However, there is not clarity regarding the
distribution of responses between teaching elders and ruling elders, and the total number of surveys mailed
was not recorded, only the number received. This will be addressed in the final section regarding the
critique of the survey.

At the time of the survey each church belonged to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and was currently in an interim situation – the former pastor or senior pastor had left – and each church was a member of Mission Presbytery. Mission Presbytery encompasses the geographical area of south Texas and includes 157 congregations with a total of 31,700 members.[5] While all five of the churches were in the interim process, four had an interim pastor currently serving the respective congregations and one had secured an interim pastor who was not yet serving the congregation. In addition, two of the churches surveyed had their interim pastors depart and subsequently each secured another interim pastor who was serving the respective congregations at the time of the survey. In order to guard the anonymity of each congregation, they have each been given a number.

Analyzing the Results

The data collected from the churches which were surveyed is significant both individually and corporately. Individually it provides a snapshot of the context of a particular congregation. Corporately it provides clearer perceptions and trends of the interim period with regard to the tasks that are being accomplished and the degree of partnership which exists. Therefore, the data is presented in the same sections which were used in the survey: Section 1: Demographic Information; Section 2: Interim Tasks; and, Section 3: Partnership Information.

The results from Section 1: Demographic Information are presented for each individual congregation in a descriptive format which provides a brief description of its context.

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[5] Mission Presbytery accessed September 14, 2015 at http://www.synodsun.com/presbyteries/.

The results for Section 2: Interim Tasks and Section 3: Partnership Information are combined and presented in both a narrative format and a table format.[6] The data is presented by listing each question and then noting the numerical and percentage results. The responses "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" are combined and referred to as "disagreement." Similarly, the responses "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" are combined and referred to as "agreement." Any "Neutral" responses or "Not/Applicable" (hereafter, "N/A") are also reported.

In the process of tabulating the data two clarifications must be noted. First, all partial percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest full percentage (≤ 0.45 has been rounded down and ≥ 0.46 has been rounded up.)[7] Second, it was found that several respondents wrote in "Not Applicable" for these sections. In fact, eleven respondents of the twenty respondents from Church #5 wrote this on their surveys. In addition, there were a small number from other sessions who wrote the same. However, because eleven of twenty possible respondents from one session wrote this, the researcher decided to report the information from questions twelve through twenty combined for all five churches and then without Church #5 in order to compare results. Therefore, the data with Churches #1 through #5 has a possible total of sixty-five respondents and the data without Church #5 has a possible total of forty-five respondents.

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[6] The specific results for each congregation's responses in Section 2: Interim Tasks and Section 3: Partnership Information can be found in Appendix P. This data is tabulated in bar graphs.

[7] Since the data has been rounded up or down some of the percentage totals will not yield exactly 100%.

Section 1: Demographic Information[8]

Church #1 is a congregation of 50-100 members in a southwest Texas town. The ruling elders responded that this congregation has an ethnic composition of 95% Caucasian and 5% Hispanic. Worship attendance in the past year averaged less than fifty people each week. Their total budget ranged between $100,000 – 249,000. In addition, this church had eight ruling elders and an interim pastor to provide leadership. At the time of the survey this congregation had been in an interim situation for over two years. In addition, the previous interim pastor departed for another call and their current interim had been with them seven to eight months.

Church #2 is a congregation of 651-800 members in suburban Austin, TX. The ruling elders reported a majority of Caucasian members with the next largest ethnic group to be Hispanics, followed by equal numbers of African-American and Asian members.[9] Worship attendance in the past year averaged between 251-400 people weekly. Their total budget ranged between $1-3MM. In addition, this congregation is led by eighteen elders and four pastors. At the time of the survey, their previous pastor had departed five to six months earlier and they had secured an interim pastor who had been with them two to three months.

Church #3 is a congregation located between Austin and San Antonio. The elders were not in agreement in their reporting of the demographic information.[10] The majority of responses indicate that the congregation is served by one pastor, has a membership of

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[8] The survey results for each respective congregation can be found in the Appendicies: Church #1, Appendix K; Church #2, Appendix L; Church #3, Appendix M; Church #4, Appendix N; and Church #5, Appendix O.

[9] See Appendix L for the reported demographic data on this congregation.

[10] See Appendix M for the reported demographic data on this congregation.

401-650 members, and an average worship attendance of 101-250 people weekly. The ethnic make up is at least 95% Caucasian. While not unanimous, a majority of respondents agreed that the total budget ranged between $500,000 and 749,000. There was also significant disagreement in reporting on two other factors (questions six and eight). First, the elders were not clear how many of them were currently serving on the session. They responded in a range from 10-12 to 19-21 elders. And second, they reported the months that have passed since the previous pastor left their congregation in a range from 11-12 to 19-24 months.[11] However, all the respondents were agreed that they had secured an interim pastor who has been with the congregation for 11 to 15 months. This congregation was working with its second interim pastor in this transition.

Church #4 is a congregation of 51-100 members in a suburban community of Austin with a reported ethnic composition that is 100% Caucasian. The majority of respondents agreed that the worship attendance averaged between 50-100 weekly and the annual budget was in the range of $100,000-249,000. At the time of the survey, the previous pastor had left 9-12 months earlier. This congregation, served by six ruling elders, secured an interim pastor who has been with the congregation for 7-10 months.

Church #5 is located in the city of San Antonio and described as an urban or inner city congregation. While there was not complete agreement on the demographic information[12], a significant majority responded that it is a congregation of 1,001-2,500 with an average attendance between 651-800 weekly and an annual budget of $3-

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[11] The discrepancy in the number of months may have been due to the fact that the current interim pastor was the second interim pastor during this interim period. Some of the elders may have responded as they did referring to the departure of the installed pastor while others may have been referring to the departure of the first interim pastor.

[12] See Appendix O for the reported demographic data on this congregation.

4.99MM. The elders were not in agreement on several other items. First, their responses indicated that they were unclear on the number of elders who served on the session with ranges from 19-21 to 25-27. Second, they were unclear about the number of pastors who served the congregation with two respondents answering five pastors and eighteen reporting three pastors. Third, they were unclear on the number of months that have passed since the previous pastor left the congregation answering with a range from 2-3 to 7-8 months. In addition, nineteen indicated that an interim pastor had been secured while one responded that the interim process had been completed and a new pastor was called. However, while this congregation had secured an interim pastor, the interim pastor had not yet started to serve the congregation.

Each of these congregations, while part of the same denomination, the same region of the country, and the same state, exercise ministry in different contexts. This can be seen from the brief descriptions, the differences in size, average weekly worship attendance, the respective communities they serve, ethnic composition, budget, size of session, number of pastors, and circumstances regarding the arrival and tenure of an interim pastor. This information needs to be considered when looking at the responses of the ruling elders.

Section 2: Interim Tasks

The design of this section of the survey was developed, in part, to determine if the interim tasks were communicated and being accomplished in congregations during the interim period. Since the interim tasks are two-fold, the Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor and the Developmental Tasks of the Congregation, this section of the survey

focused on both sets of tasks. These tasks were identified on the survey with a description of each so that the respondents had clarity regarding the specific nature of each task.

The Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor

In general, the data measured indicated agreement that the process tasks were being completed or have been completed. The results of the Process Task data are presented in Tables 1 through 6.[13]

Question 12a. "The interim pastor joined the system." (See Table 1.) Forty-three of the possible sixty-five respondents (66%) agreed with the statement. Four people (6%) did not respond to this question, two people (3%) disagreed, five (8%) were neutral, and eleven (17%) wrote in "N/A." The data without Church #5 includes a total of 45

Table 1: Question 12a

Question 12a. The interim pastor joined the system.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	1	5	14	29	11	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	1	1	14	29	0	45	45

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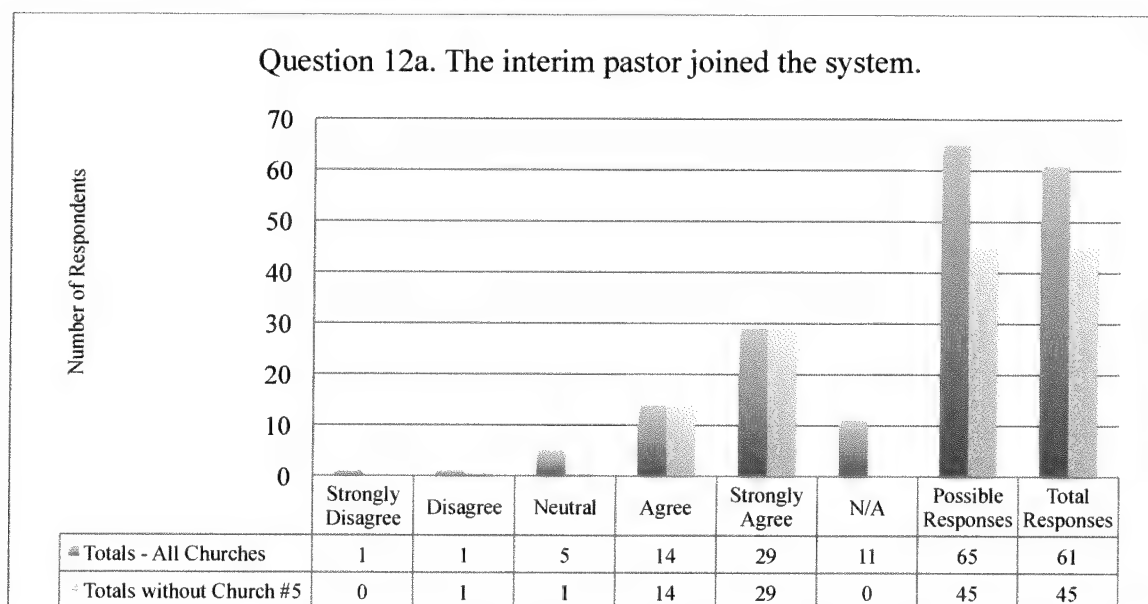
[13] The raw data is combined in Appendix P.

respondents including one (2%) disagreement, one (2%) neutral, and 43 (96%) in agreement. The four churches that had an interim on site indicated that he or she has "joined the system."

Question 12b. "The interim pastor analyzed the system." (See Table 2.) Thirty-eight of the respondents (59%) agreed with the statement, 2 people (3%) disagreed, ten (16%) were neutral, eleven (17%) wrote in "N/A," and four people (6%) did not respond to the question. The data without Church #5 includes one (2%) disagreement, six (13%)

Table 2: Question 12b

Question 12b. The interim pastor analyzed the system.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	1	10	13	25	11	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	1	6	13	25	0	45	45
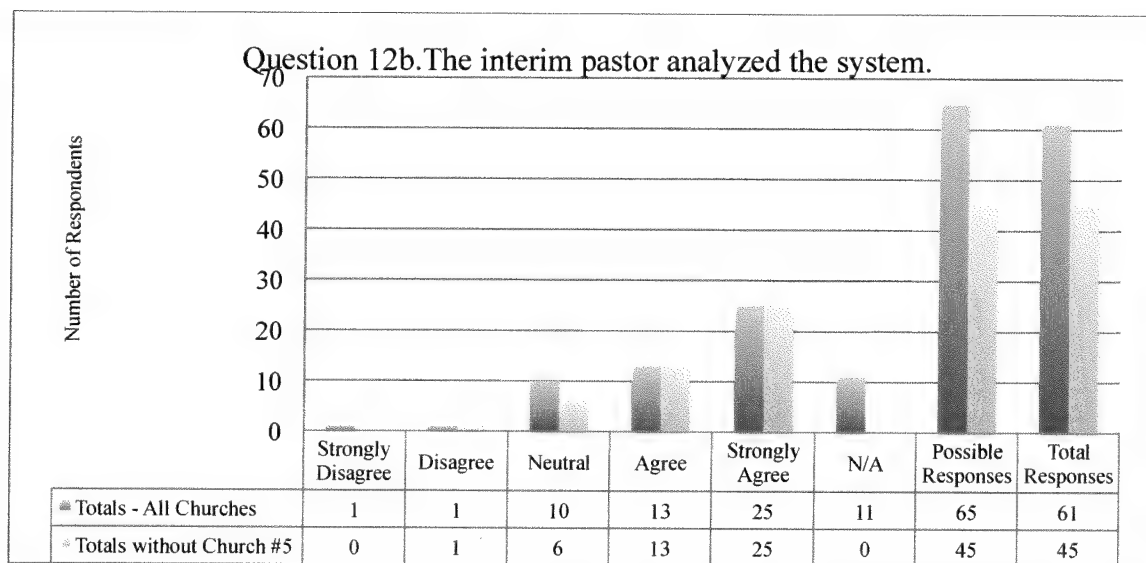
neutral responses, and thirty eight (84%) in agreement. Though not as strong as in the previous question, there is general agreement that the interim pastor has "analyzed the system."

Question 12c. "The interim pastor connected with the denomination." (See Table 3.) Forty-four (68%) of the respondents agreed with this statement while two (3%) disagreed, four (6%) were neutral, eleven (17%) wrote in N/A and four (6%) did not

respond to the question. The data without Church #5 is even more positive as forty-four (98%) of the respondents agreed and only one person (2%) disagreed. The data indicates that interim pastors who were in place and serving these congregations were making connections with the denomination.

Table 3: Question 12c
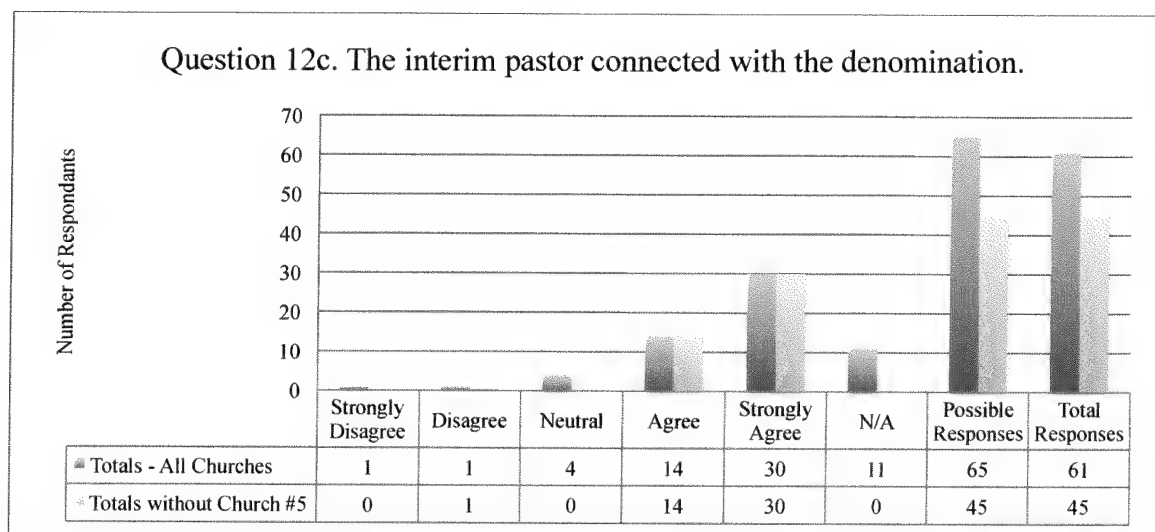
Question 12c. The interim pastor connected with the denomination.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	1	4	14	30	11	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	1	0	14	30	0	45	45

Question 12d. "The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined." (See Table 4.) Forty (62%) of the people who answered agreed with this statement while two (3%) disagreed, seven (11%) were neutral, eleven (17%) responded with N/A, and four (6%) of people did not respond. Without the responses of Church #5 forty people (89%) agreed, while one (2%) person disagreed, three (7%) were neutral, and one (2%) person did not answer. Again, there seems to be strong agreement that the interim pastors in these four churches were attending to any special focus issues as well as the tasks that were outlined.

Table 4: Question 12d
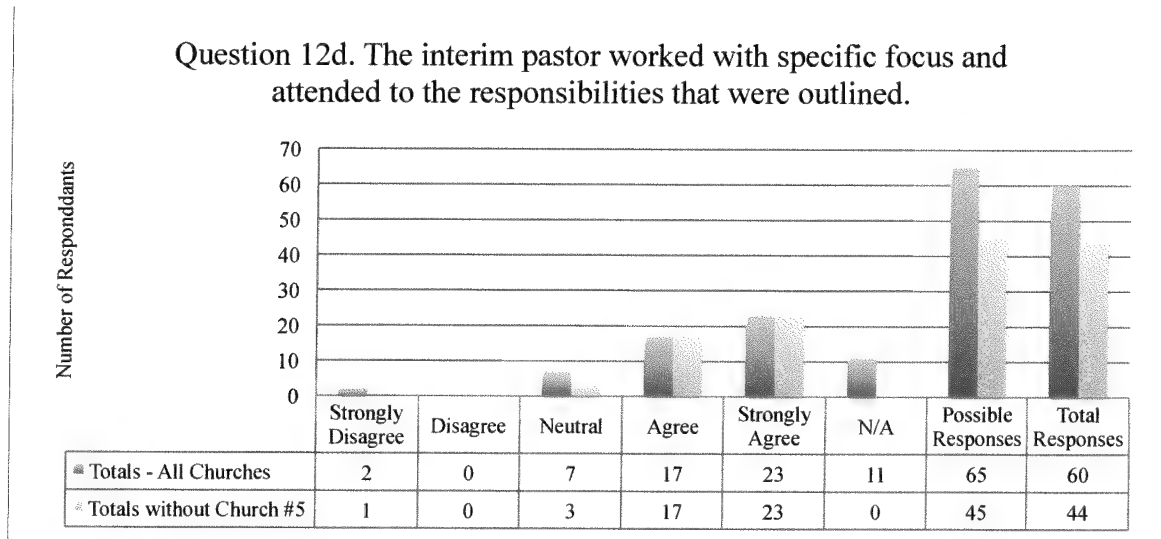
Question 12d. The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	2	0	7	17	23	11	65	60
Totals without Church #5	1	0	3	17	23	0	45	44

Question 12e. "The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership." (See Table 5.) Twenty people (31%) responded in agreement on this statement, while three (5%) disagreed, five (8%) were neutral, eleven (17%) indicated N/A, and twenty-six (40%) didn't respond. Without the responses of

Table 5: Question 12e

Question 12e. The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	2	5	14	6	11	65	39
Totals without Church #5	0	2	1	14	6	0	45	23
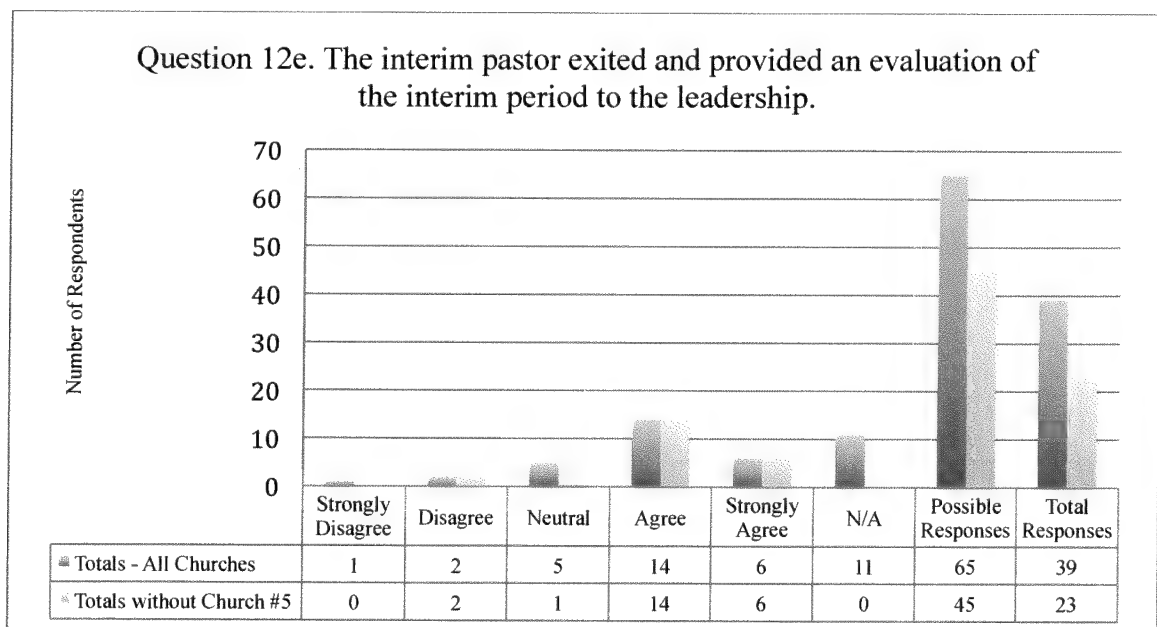
Church #5 there were still twenty (44%) responses of agreement, two (4%) people

disagreed, no one (0%) replied N/A, and twenty-three (51%) people did not respond.

These responses are quite significant, with and without the responses of Church #5. None

of the interim pastors had left these churches at the time of the survey.

This fact leaves raises the question if people understood the question that was

being asked. The responses seem to indicate that those who responded with disagreement,

were neutral, or replied N/A understood the question. However, the expectation of the

researcher was that the majority of respondents would have replied on the disagreement

end of the spectrum. There are two possibilities for this finding. First, those in Church #1

and Church #3 may have answered from the perspective of having experienced the

termination of their previous interim pastors. Second, it may be that some of the

respondents answered on the agreement end of the spectrum because the interim pastor

had presented information evaluating the interim period and possibly spoke about a

coming termination. At best, the data is unclear.

Following the questions on the Process Tasks, the respondents were asked if the

Process Tasks had been explained to them. Question 13: "The process tasks listed above

have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery."

(See Table 6.) Of the sixty-five respondents, forty-five (69%) agreed that the process

tasks were explained to them, while three people (5%) disagreed, eight (12%) responded

neutral, four (6%) responded N/A, and five (8%) did not respond. Without Church #5

thirty-six (80%) of the respondents were in agreement, while two (4%) disagreed, five

(11%) were neutral, no one (0%) marked N/A, and two (4%) did not respond.

It is interesting to note that only Church #4 had total agreement that the process tasks were explained to them. Each of the other five churches had at least one person who responded neutral or in disagreement. These results could indicate that the people who disagreed, were neutral, or did not respond may not have attended a meeting where the tasks were explained, may not have understood what was being explained, or may not have been paying attention. However, it seems by the total results of the respondents from all five churches (69%) that the Process Tasks were explained.

Table 6: Question 13

Question 13. The process tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	2	8	22	23	4	65	60
Totals without Church #5	0	2	5	18	18	0	45	43
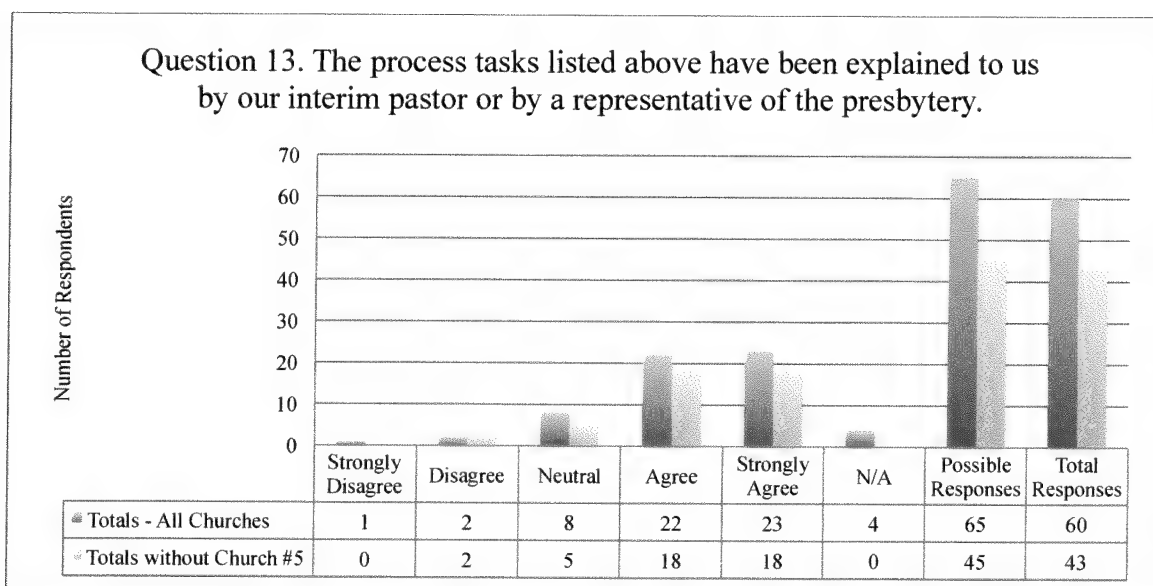
The Developmental Tasks of the Congregation

The Developmental Tasks will be reviewed much like the Process Tasks. Again, it is important to remember that although the interim pastor for Church #5 had been secured, the pastor had not yet arrived or begun to work with the congregation. Therefore, the data has been calculated, as before, with all five churches together and

then the data from Church #5 has been taken out to see if there is a significant difference in the results.

Question 14a. "Coming to terms with history." (See Table 7.) Of the sixty-five respondents, forty-five (69%) agreed with this statement, five (8%) disagreed, four (6%) were neutral, five (8%) responded N/A, and one person (2%) did not respond. Without the responses of Church #5, there were thirty-eight respondents (84%) who agreed, three (7%) disagreed, and four people (9%) answered neutral. Of specific interest were two results. The first, Church #4 was the only church to be unanimous in agreeing that they are accomplishing this task. And second, the disagreement and neutral responses from Church #1, Church #2, and Church #3 were minimal. This seems to indicate that the churches with interim pastors present were accomplishing this task.

Table 7: Question 14a

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	4	9	31	14	5	65	64
Totals without Church #5	0	3	4	24	14	0	45	45
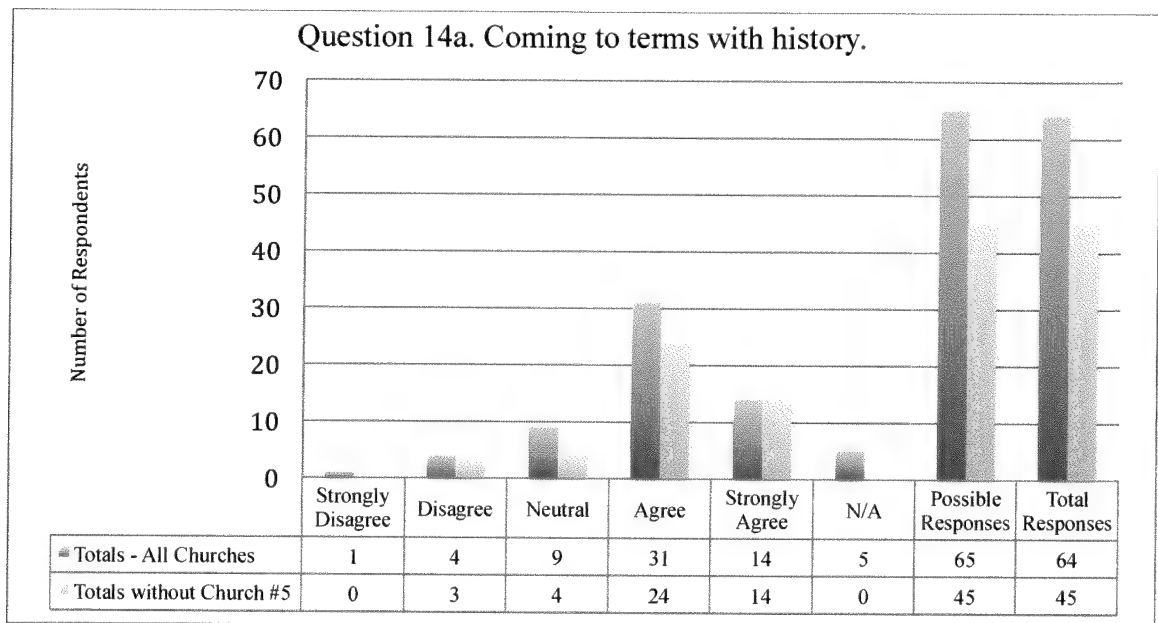
Question 14b. "Seeking a new identity." (See Table 8.) Overall, thirty-one (48%) of the respondents indicated agreement, while five (8%) disagreed, sixteen (25%) were

neutral, and five (8%) indicated N/A. Without Church #5, thirty-one (69%) of the

respondents were in agreement, while three (7%) disagreed, and eleven (24%) marked

neutral. The responses without Church #5 indicate a greater percentage of agreement and

a slightly smaller percentage of disagreement and neutral responses, however there was

less agreement regarding this developmental task. These results may suggest three

possible options for the congregations with interim pastors in place: first, this task may

not yet have been addressed by some of the congregations; second, this task may have

been in the early stages of being addressed, but there may not yet have been tangible

results; or third, this task may have been in various stages of completion, yet the

Table 8: Question 14b

Question 14b. Seeking a new identitty.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	4	16	31	7	5	65	64
Totals without Church #5	0	3	11	25	6	0	45	45
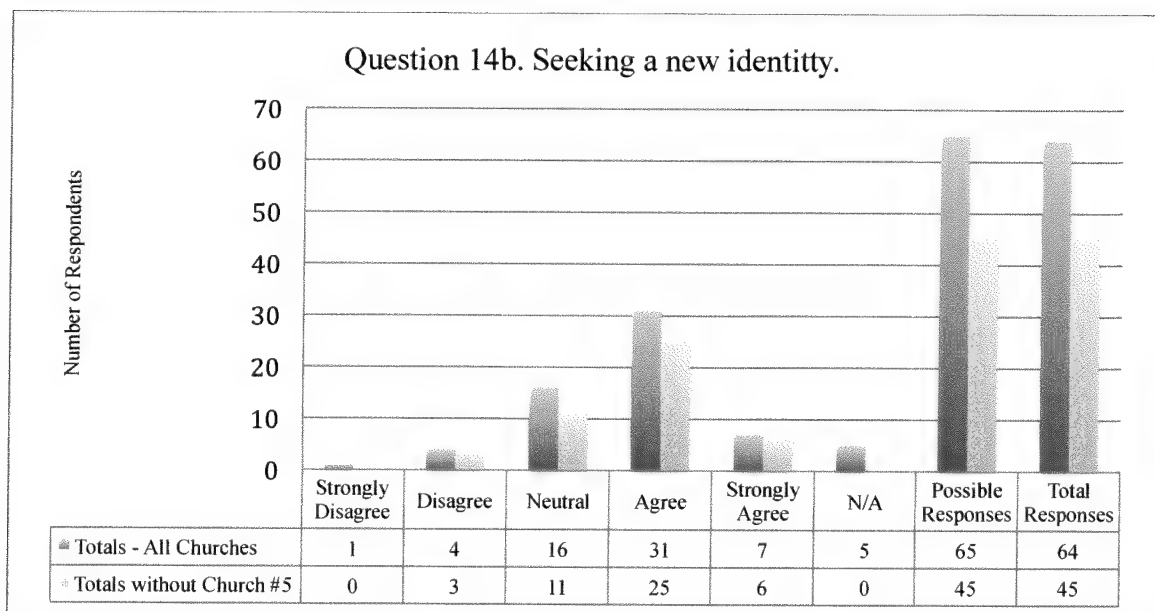
respondents were simply not in agreement about the progress that has been made. While

this task has not been completed to the satisfaction of the majority of respondents from

Church #5, the remaining four churches had 31% of their respondents who disagreed

(7%) or marked neutral (24%). The data seem to indicate that in these churches this task is receiving attention, but more work needs to be done.

Question 14c. "Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages." (See Table 9.) Of the sixty-five respondents, forty people (62%) indicated agreement, while seven (11%) disagreed, twelve (19%) were neutral, five (8%) indicated N/A, and one person (2%) did not respond to this statement. With all five churches responses combined, this is the highest number of disagreements regarding any of the process or developmental tasks. However, it should be noted that four of the seven disagreement responses (57%) came from Church #5. Again, this may be due to the fact that an interim pastor was not yet serving the church at the time of this survey.

Table 9: Question 14c

Question 14c. Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	4	3	12	30	10	5	65	64
Totals without Church #5	2	1	7	26	9	0	45	45
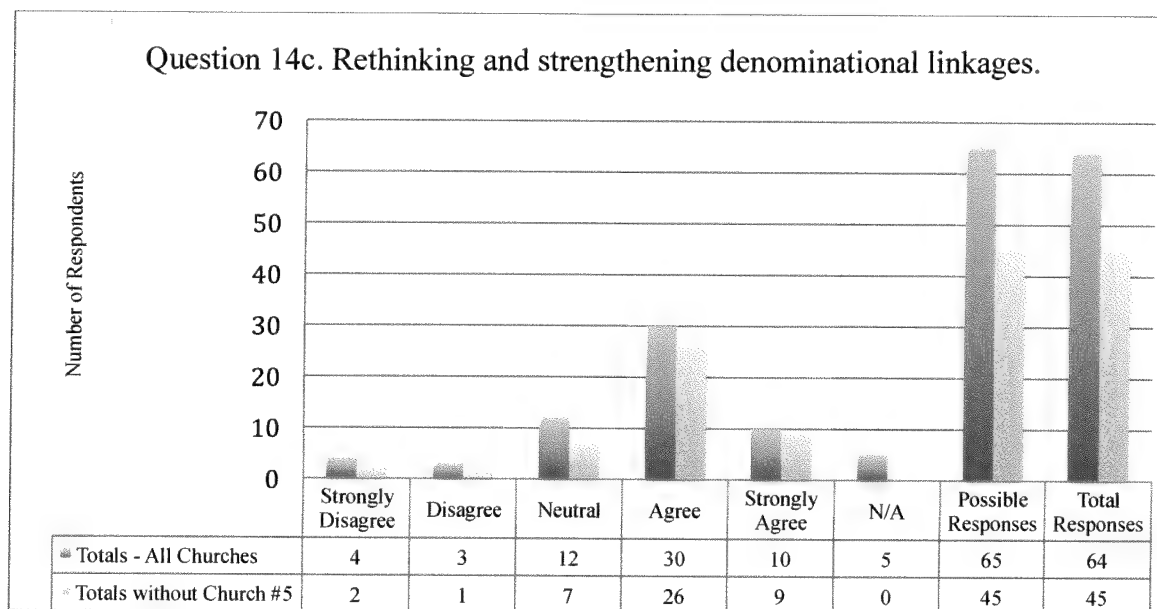
Without Church #5 there were thirty-five respondents (78%) in agreement with the statement, while three (7%) disagreed, and seven (16%) were neutral. This indicates that greater than three out of four of the respondents from the four churches with interim

pastors in place were in agreement that this task has been or was in the process of being addressed.

Question 14d. "Facilitating shifts in power and leadership." (See Table 10.) Overall, forty of the respondents (62%) were in agreement with this statement, while six (9%) disagreed, twelve (19%) were neutral, five (8%) indicated N/A, and two people (3%) did not mark a response. Without Church #5, thirty-four respondents (76%) were in agreement, three (7%) disagreed, seven (16%) answered neutral, and one person (2%) did not mark a response. The responses indicate that just over three out of four who responded and had an interim pastor serving their congregations were in agreement that this task has been or was being addressed.

Table 10: Question 14d

Question 14d. Facilitating shifts in power and leadership.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	5	12	30	10	5	65	63
Totals without Church #5	0	3	7	24	10	0	45	44
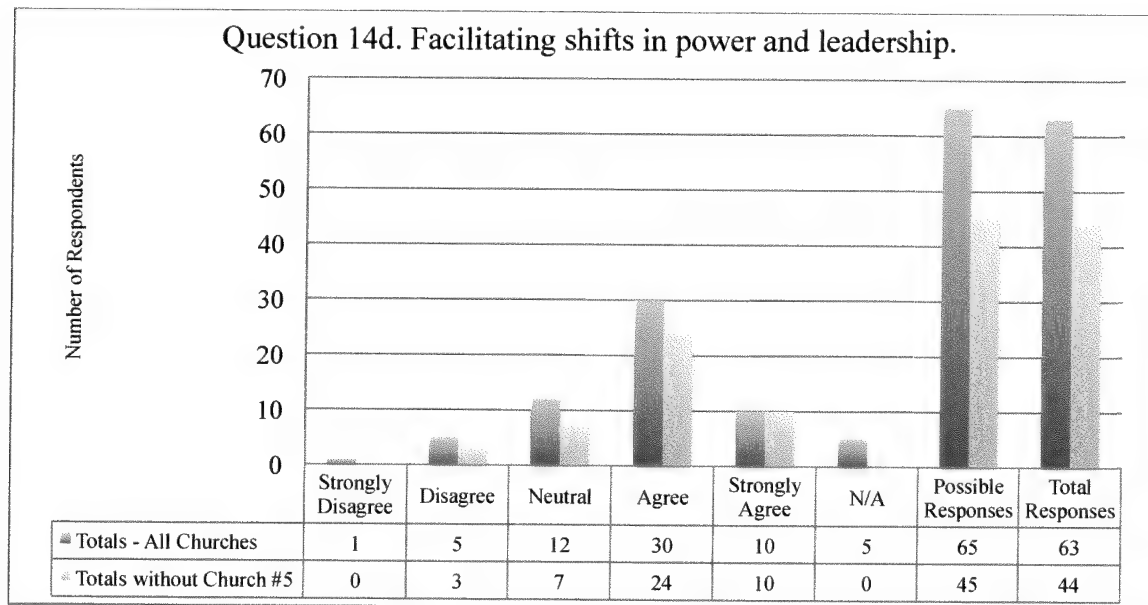
Question 14e. "Commitment to new leadership and a new future." (See Table 11.) Overall, forty-three (66%) of the sixty-five respondents indicated agreement with this

statement, while only four (6%) disagreed, six (9%) were neutral, six (9%) wrote in N/A, and one person (2%) did not mark an answer.

Table 11: Question 14e

Question 14e. Commitment to new leadership and a new future.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	3	11	32	11	6	65	64
Totals without Church #5	0	2	6	25	11	1	45	45
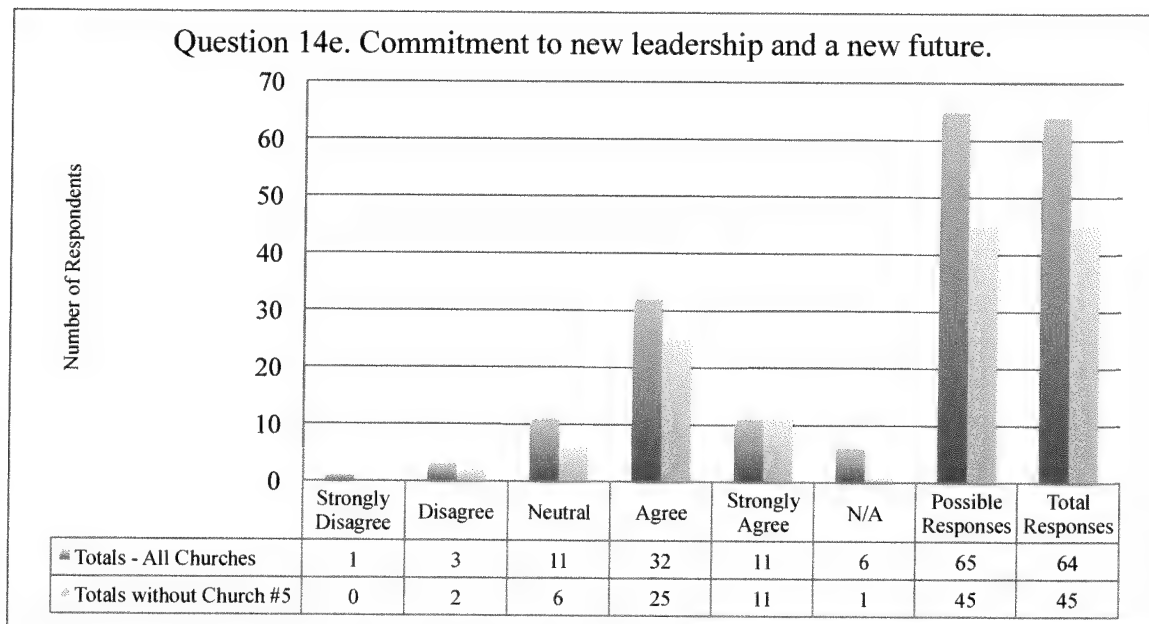
Without Church #5 thirty-six respondents (80%) were in agreement, two (4%) disagreed, six (13%) were neutral, and one (2%) wrote in N/A. The data indicate that this task has been or was in the process of being completed in Churches #1-4 at the time the survey was completed.

Question 15. "The Developmental Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery." (See Table 12.) The response rate to this question was 100%. Of the total of sixty-five respondents, forty-two (65%) responded in agreement, six (9%) disagreed, eleven (17%) were neutral, and six people (9%) wrote in N/A. However, the data without Church #5 is of interest. It includes agreement for thirty-six respondents (80%), only three disagreements (7%), and six

(13%) neutral responses. This means that over three-quarters of the respondents indicated

that the Developmental Tasks were explained to them.

Table 12: Question 15

Question 15. The developmental tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a respresentative of the presbytery.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	2	4	11	24	18	6	65	65
Totals without Church #5	0	3	6	19	17	0	45	45
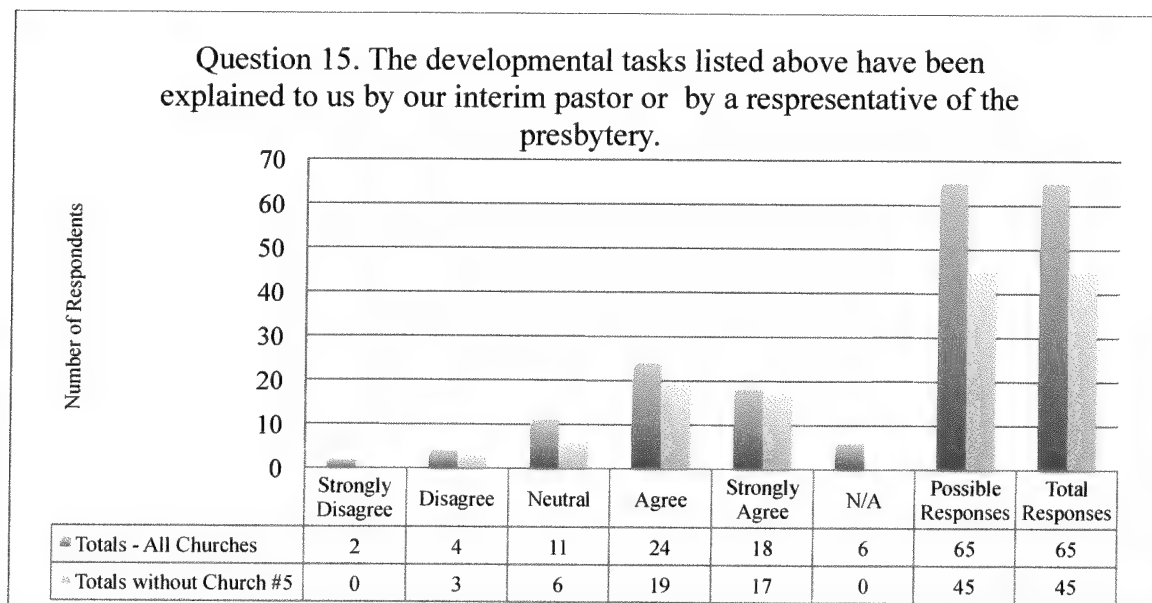
The responses to this question are quite similar to the data collected in question

thirteen, 80% agreement. The possibilities regarding those who didn't agree or respond to

this statement about the Developmental Tasks suggest several possibilities regarding the

communication of the Developmental Tasks. First, it may be that the tasks were

communicated, but not heard. Second, it may mean that the tasks were communicated but

not in a way that was understood by the elders who were present. Third, it may mean that

the tasks were only partially communicated. Fourth, it may mean that the respondents

were not present when or if the tasks were communicated. And, finally, it may mean that

the tasks were not communicated at all. However, the latter is problematic considering

there is 80% agreement among the respondents that the Developmental Tasks were

explained.

Overall, the data collected from the ruling elders in these five congregations seem to indicate that, in congregations where an interim pastor was serving, the interim tasks – both the Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor and the Developmental Tasks of the Congregation – had been or were in the process of being completed. This observation supports the results of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) data collected in "A Study of the Effectiveness of Interim Pastors" cited previously.

Section 3: Partnership Information

The final section of the survey was developed to assess the response to five statements regarding the respondents' perceptions of the following: the presence of anxiety, the reduction of anxiety, the working relationship between the interim pastor and the congregation, the interim pastor's working relationship with the session, and the session's working relationship with the interim pastor. The responses to these five statements point to the partnership or lack of partnership that exist between the interim pastor, the congregation and the session.

Question sixteen was designed to assess whether or not anxiety existed when the installed pastor announced that he or she was leaving. This question was applicable to all five of the churches in the survey. However, questions seventeen through twenty each assume that the interim pastor has been working in the congregation. Therefore the data for these questions will be tallied together and then without Church #5 as an interim pastor had not yet begun to work with that congregation. The results of the Partnership Data are presented in Tables 13-17.

Question 16. "When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious." (See Table 13.) Of the sixty-five respondents, sixty-one (94%) agreed, while two (3%) disagreed, and two (3%) were neutral. Without Church #5, forty-one (91%) of the respondents agreed, two (4%) disagreed, and two (4%) responded neutral.

Table 13: Question 16

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	1	1	2	19	42	0	65	65
Totals without Church #5	1	1	2	15	26	0	45	45

Question 16. When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious.
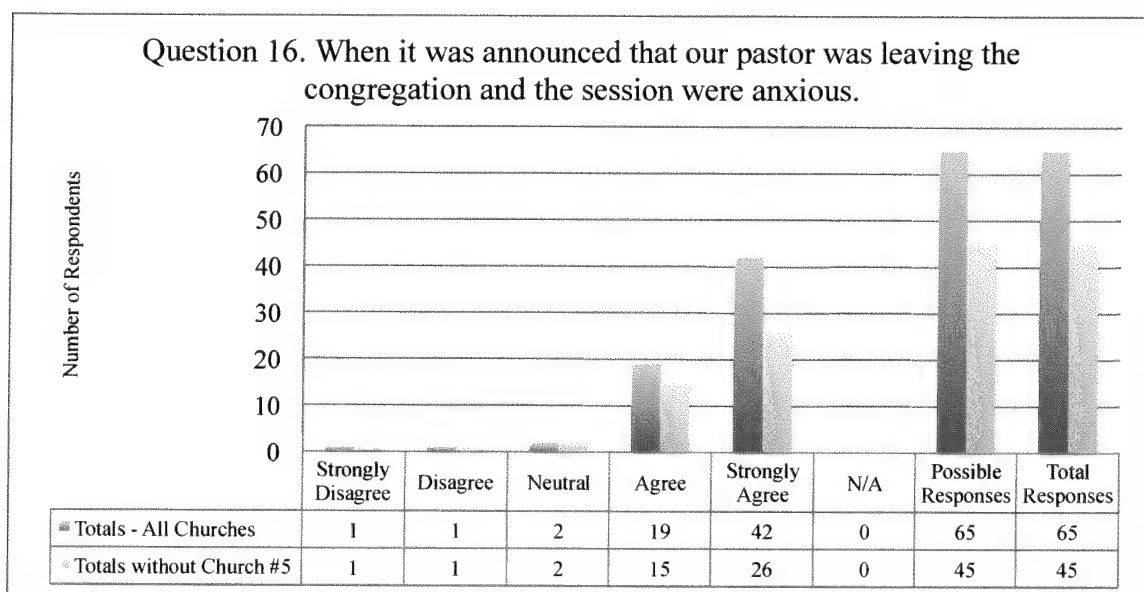
This question had the highest level of agreement with all five churches included on the entire survey. In addition, of those who indicated agreement, nineteen respondents (31%) responded "Agree" and forty-two (69%) responded "Strongly Agree." Not only was this the highest level of agreement of all five churches on the survey, this was the highest percentage of "Strongly Agree" on the survey. It seems clear from the data of all five churches that anxiety was present at the point when the pastor announced that he or she was leaving.

Question 17. "During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened." (See Table 14.) Thirty-nine of the respondents (60%) indicated agreement that the anxiety lessened during the interim period, while thirteen (20%) disagreed, five (8%) were neutral, five (8%) responded N/A, and three (5%) people did not answer this question. Without Church #5, thirty-eight respondents (84%) indicated agreement, three (7%) disagreement, and four (9%) were neutral.

Table 14: Question 17

Question 17. During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	5	8	5	27	12	5	65	62
Totals without Church #5	1	2	4	27	11	0	45	45
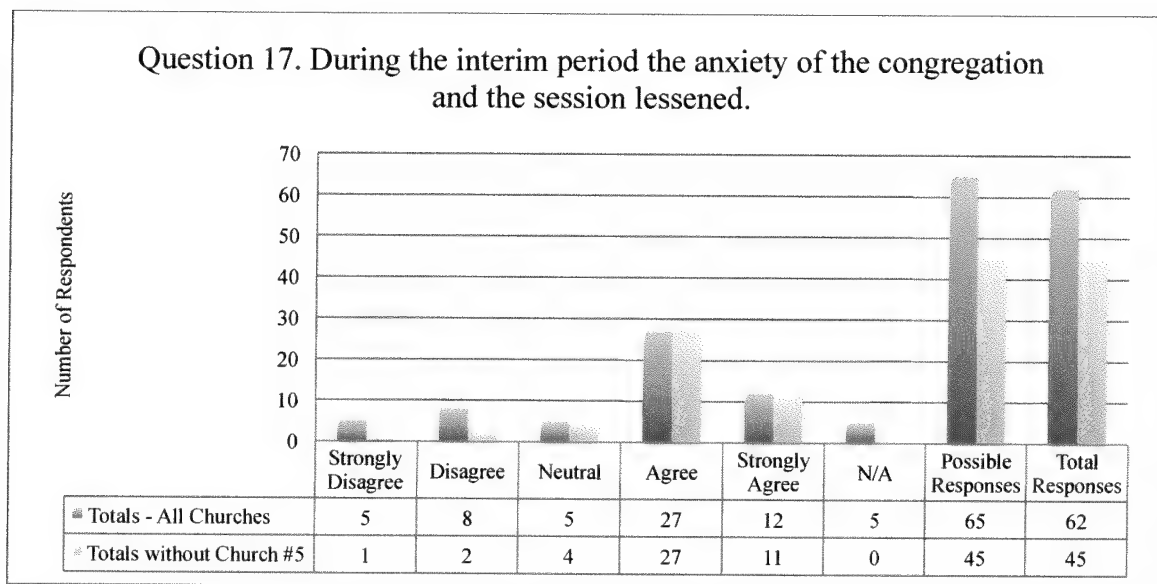
This data, when compared with the data of the previous question, confirms that the elders in the four churches that had interim pastors working with them perceived a lessened level of anxiety for the session and for the congregation. While the percentage of agreement was not as high as question sixteen, the data still shows a perceived reduction in the level of anxiety. However, it should be noted that the elders were answering this question with regard to their perceptions of the level of anxiety in the

congregation. If the congregations were asked about their level of anxiety the results may have been different.

Question 18. "Our interim pastor and our congregation worked well together." (See Table 15.) Of the sixty-five respondents, forty-three (66%) indicated agreement with this statement. There was one person (2%) who disagreed, seven (11%) who responded neutral, nine (14%) who wrote in N/A, and five (8%) who did not answer this question. This indicates that a clear majority of the respondents perceived that the interim pastor and the congregation, at the time of the survey, worked well together.

Table 15: Question 18

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	0	1	7	25	18	9	65	60
Totals without Church #5	0	1	1	25	18	0	45	45
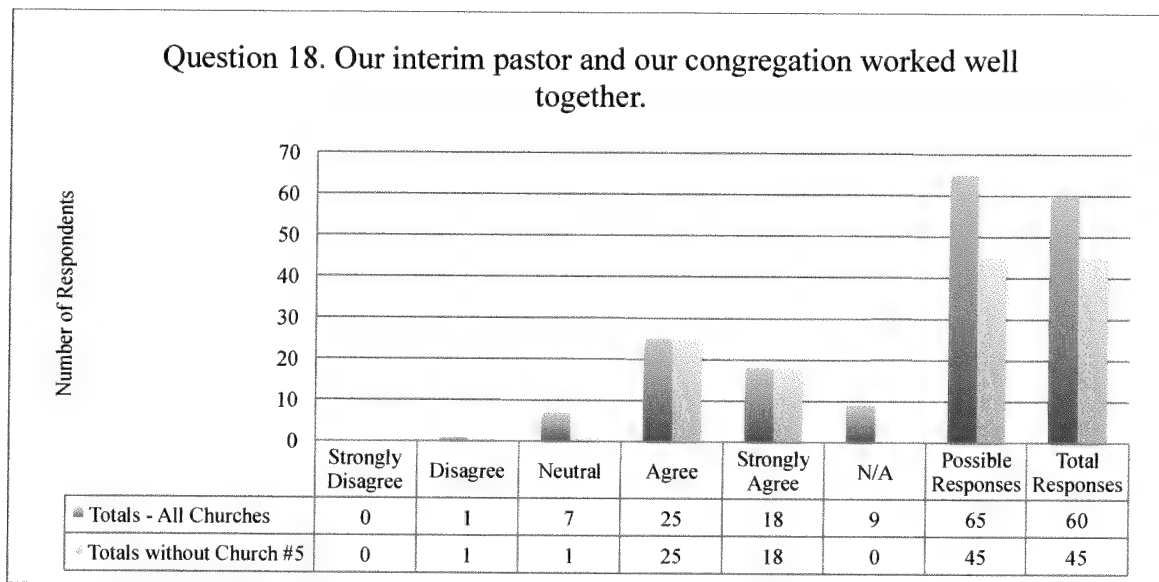
Without the data from Church #5, the results are significantly different. Of the forty-five respondents, forty-three (96%) were in agreement, one (2%) disagreed, and one (2%) was neutral. This was the highest level of agreement on the survey with the four churches who had a interim pastor. Of those respondents in Churches #1-4 who agreed with this statement, twenty-five respondents (58%) answered "Agree" and eighteen

(42%) answered "Strongly Agree." The elders who completed this survey in these four churches, which had an interim pastor working with their congregations, felt that the interim pastor and the congregation worked well together.

Question 19. "Our interim pastor worked well with our session." (See Table 16.) A total of forty-four of the respondents (68%) indicated agreement with this statement while seven (11%) responded neutral, ten (15%) wrote in N/A, and four (6%) did not mark a response. However, without Church #5, while forty-four elders (98%) responded

Table 16: Question 19

Question 19. Our interim pastor worked well with our session.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	0	0	7	20	24	10	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	0	1	20	24	0	45	45
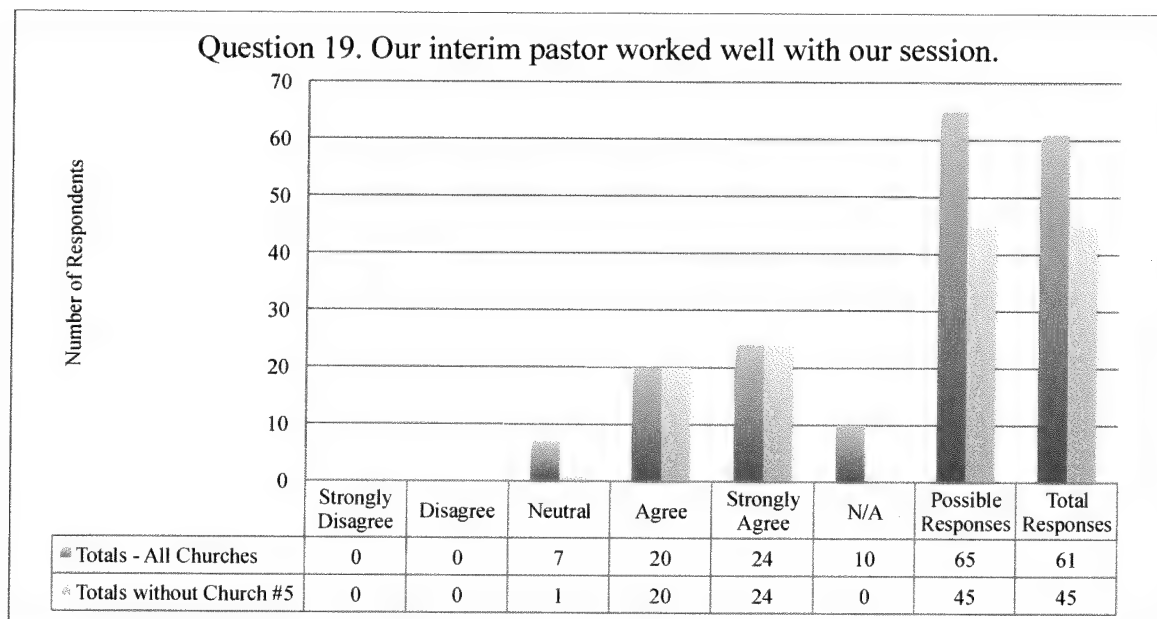
in agreement, only one person (2%) responded neutral. This was the highest percentage of agreement among the four churches with interim pastors on the survey. The data from this question indicates that all but one of the elders in the four churches with interim pastors, who took the survey, were close to unanimous in their agreement that the interim pastor who was working with their respective sessions was doing well.

Question 20. "Our session worked well with our interim pastor." (See Table 17.) While, questions 19 and 20 were similar, they were designed specifically for evaluating different information. While question 19 sought to gain a perception of the nature of the interim pastor's work with the session, question 20 focuses on the nature of the session's work with the interim pastor. Of the sixty-five respondents, forty-three (66%) were in agreement with this statement, while no one (0%) disagreed, eight people (12%) responded neutral, ten (15%) wrote in N/A, and four (6%) did not answer this question. Without Church #5, forty-three respondents (96%) were in agreement with this statement, and two people (4%) were neutral. The perception of the elders in the four churches with interim pastors was that they, as elders, are working well with the interim pastors in each of their congregations. Compared with the responses given in question 19, the data from these four congregations regarding interim pastors working well with sessions and sessions working well with interim pastors seems to be confirmed.

Table 17: Question 20

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Possible Responses	Total Responses
Totals - All Churches	0	0	8	23	20	10	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	0	2	23	20	0	45	45
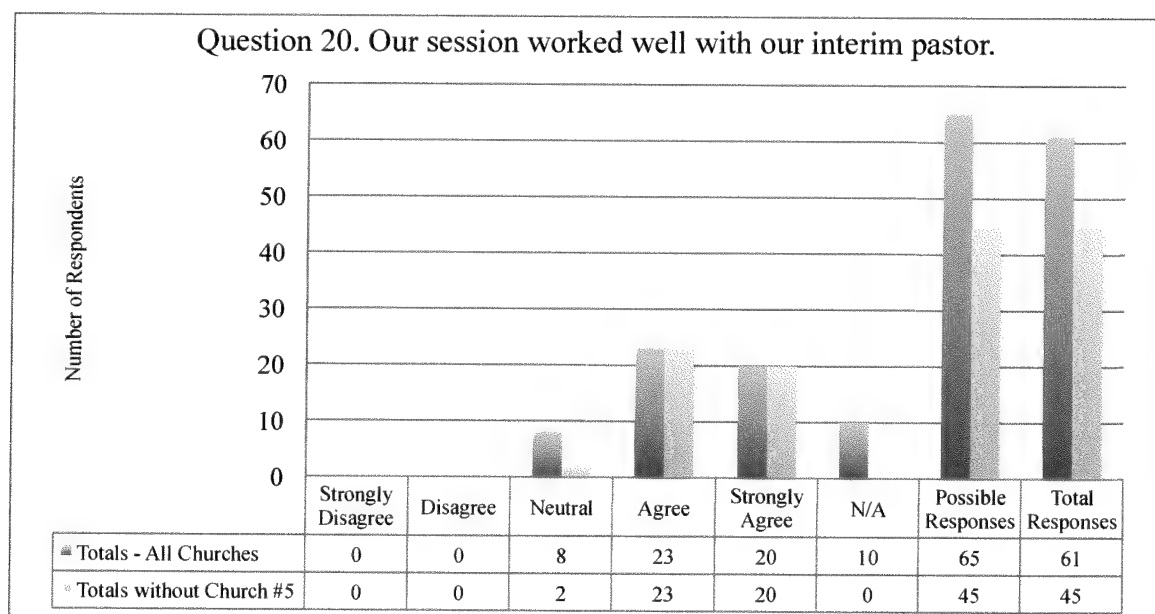
Survey Critique

After creating, administering, analyzing, and reviewing the survey, the researcher identified both strengths and weaknesses of the survey. Overall, the survey provided a great deal of information from the ruling elders of the five congregations surveyed. However, the survey could be strengthened in several ways for future use. One overall change would be to track the number of surveys which were distributed and received rather than simply those that were received. This could be done by numbering each survey to specifically track how many were distributed and how may were received. Other changes are addressed by looking specifically at each of the three major sections of the survey: Demographic Information, Interim Tasks, and Partnership Information.

Section 1: Demographic Information

The data collected in this section focused on the demographic information about each particular congregation as well as on the status of the interim situation for the respective churches. When compiling the information in this section of the survey it became evident to the researcher that the elders of the various congregations were not as familiar or knowledgeable about the basic demographic information as was expected. In some churches there was differing information about the size of the congregation (question one), while in others there were differing perspectives on the average worship attendance in the past year (question two). [14] There was general agreement about the type of community in which the respective churches were located (question three) as well as

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[14] See Appendices K (Church #1), M (Church #3), N (Church #4), and O (Church #5). Churches #1, #3, and #5 were not in agreement on the size of their respective congregations: Church #1, 0-100; Church #3, 251-800; and Church #5, 801-2,500. Ranges of average attendance were reported: Church #3, 101-650; Church #4, 0-100; and, Church #5, 401-1,000.

the amount of the annual budget for each congregation.[15] In three of the churches, there was a lack of clarity in response to the ethnic composition of the respective congregations.[16] And finally, for two of the congregations the number of elders currently serving on session was unclear[17] and for one of the congregations there was not clarity regarding the number of pastors serving the congregation.[18]

The differences noted in some of the demographic details may have reasonable explanations. It may be that some of the elders simply do not know or are not interested in the metrics of the congregations which they serve. However, "ruling elders, together with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church."[19] In exercise of their leadership and governance responsibilities there is a need for elders to know the people whom they lead and the congregation in which they serve.

Each year an annual statistical report is requested by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This report is typically approved by each session before it is submitted. The report contains the data which was contained in this section of the

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[15] See Appendices M (Church #3) and O (Church #5). Church #3 respondents described their community as "Town," "Suburban," and "Urban;" while Church #5 described their community as both "Urban" and "Inner City." The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed on the range of their respective budgets.

[16] See Appendices L (Church #2), M (Church #3), and O (Church #5). Church #2, Church #3, and Church #5 all had various responses to this question. It is clear that each of the congregations had an ethnic majority of "Caucasian" members, however the percentages were not clear.

[17] See Appendices M (Church #3) and O (Church#5). Church #3 responded with a range of elders from 10-21, while Church #5 responded with a range of elders from 19-27. While there is a majority of agreement with Church #5, Church #3 seems to have less clarity.

[18] See Appendices M (Church #3) and O (Church #5). Church #3 had one responded who indicated that there was a pastor as well as a pastoral intern. Church #5 had two respondents who indicated they had five pastors and eighteen respondents who indicated three pastors.

[19] *Book of Order: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Part II, 2013/2015 (G-2.0301), 27.

survey. In the future, if this type of survey is used it may be helpful to request that a session provide the most recent statistical report to substantiate this data.

Like the demographic information for the churches the data regarding the status of the interim process in each congregation was varied. The recollection on the time that has passed since the previous pastor had left the congregation (question eight) was perceived differently by three of the churches.[20] In addition, the status of the transitional period (question nine) was reported by the respective churches that they had each secured an interim pastor.[21] However, the congregations varied on how long an interim had been with the congregations. Because none of the five churches had completed the interim process (despite the response of one person in Church #5 on question nine), the question regarding how long the interim pastors served the respective congregations was not applicable for any of these congregations.

In the combined responses, a total of seventeen people responded "N/A" to questions ten (four responses) and eleven (thirteen responses). In the future, if this survey is used it would be helpful to add the response category of "Not Applicable" for these questions.

In retrospect, it may have been helpful to gather additional demographic information from the churches with regard to the age of the congregation, the recent tenure of pastors in each congregation, and the how many pastoral transitions the congregation has experienced. A young congregation may approach pastoral transition

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[20] See Appendices M (Church #3), N (Church #4), and O (Church #5). Church #3 respondents ranged from 11-24 months; Church #4 ranged from 9-12 months; and, Church #5 ranged from 2-8 months.

[21] See Appendix M. One respondent from Church #5 responded that the interim process was completed and a new pastor was called.

differently than a congregation that has been in existence for many decades. A congregation that has experienced long-tenured pastors may be more anxious about the departure of a pastor than a congregation that has dealt with short-tenured pastors. In addition, it may be helpful to determine the long-term effect of multiple pastoral transitions on the emotional system of congregation. Each of these pieces of data may provide helpful insight to how receptive a given congregation may be to deal with change, transition, and transformation.

Section 2: Interim Tasks

The interim tasks on the survey were divided into two different sections: the Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor (questions twelve a-e and thirteen) and the Developmental Tasks of the Congregation (questions fourteen a-e and fifteen). In order that the respondents would understand the different tasks, the tasks were explained on the survey. As the data was compiled number of "N/A" responses that were written in on the survey were observed. While most were from ruling elders of Church #5, other respondents wrote in "N/A" as well. Because of this, it is the opinion of this researcher that an additional response of "Not Applicable" be added to the survey for any future use.

Section 3: Partnership Information

The information gathered in this section provided insight on several different aspects of partnership during the interim period. First, questions sixteen and seventeen indicated that anxiety was present when the change of pastoral leadership was announced and that the anxiety lessened during the interim period. However, these two questions

each were measuring two variables. In question sixteen, rather than asking about the anxiety being present in both the congregation and the session, it would be advantageous to split the question into two separate statements:

1. "When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation was anxious."

2. "When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the session was anxious."

This would provide clear information about the anxiety of the congregation and clear information about the anxiety of the session. While both may be anxious at the announcement of a pastor's leaving, they are both different groups of people and may have different levels of anxiety. In the same way, it may be advantageous to split question seventeen into two separate statements as well. The following is suggested in order to ascertain information about the lessening of the anxiety of the congregation and the anxiety of the session:

1. "During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation lessened."

2. "During the interim period the anxiety of the session lessened."

By separating questions sixteen and seventeen each into two statements a researcher would have the ability to measure the presence of anxiety and to make separate comparisons for the congregation in general and the session in particular.

This same argument could be made for question eighteen. However, the working relationship between the session and the interim pastor is closer than the relationship with the congregation. This question is simply asking for the elders' perception of how the interim pastor worked with the members of the congregation in general. A future

researcher may which to explore the dynamics between an interim pastor and the congregation as a whole.

Questions nineteen and twenty served to provide a balance of the perception regarding the working relationship between the interim pastor and the session. The reason for the differences of the two statements was to look at the partnership from the perspective of the interim pastor working with the session (question nineteen) and from the perspective of the session working with the interim pastor (question twenty). This distinction was made to access the ruling elders' perceptions of the interim pastor's desire and ability to work with the session as well as to access the ruling elders' perceptions of whether they were working cooperatively in partnership with the interim pastor.

Conclusions

This survey collected data from the ruling elders of five congregations that were engaged in an interim process. While they were each a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and members of Mission Presbytery, they each were different with respect to size, worship attendance, location, and status in the interim process. However, they shared several things in common. First, each of these congregations had experienced a change in a pastoral relationship. Second, each of these congregations were in various stages of transition, though some were further along than others regarding the interim tasks. Third, the respondents indicated that they had experienced anxiety at the announcement of the departure of a pastor. Of the four churches with interim pastors currently serving, the elders reported that the anxiety had lessened. Fourth, the churches with interim pastors seemed to be working through the interim tasks. Fifth, the elders who responded indicated a good working relationship between the interim pastor and the

congregation as well as a good working relationship between the interim pastor and the session. And finally, there was general agreement that the sessions worked well with the interim pastors.

These results indicate that when a church experiences a change in pastoral leadership there is heightened anxiety. This anxiety lessens during the time of transition between installed pastors when interim leadership is in place to help a congregation navigate the transition and begin to accomplish the various task which must be addressed during that time. Through the transition, partnership with an interim pastor to walk with a congregation through the interim tasks is critical.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

"Our pastor is leaving." When those words are heard a congregation has entered into a change and a subsequent transition that has the possibility to lead toward transformation. However, for transformation to happen a critical partnership must exist between the congregation, its leadership and its interim pastor. There are many tasks that must be addressed by the interim pastor as well as many tasks that must be addressed by the congregation and its leadership. This thesis-project has provided the history of interim ministry as well as Biblical paradigms from the Old and New Testaments to illustrate the emotional responses and the leadership that can exist in the midst of change and transition and ultimately lead to transformation. Literature was reviewed to consider the process of change, the stages of the interim process, and the various tasks which need to be completed. Finally, a survey was utilized to assess ruling elders' understanding of their respective congregation's demographics, interim tasks which need to be addressed, and the presence of a partnership with the interim pastor. This final chapter highlights major findings of the research and thoughts about future research regarding congregations in transition.

Major Findings

Over the course of the research for this thesis-project there were many things learned about interim ministry. The major discoveries for this researcher are presented in two different groupings: Discoveries from the Literature and Discoveries from the Survey.

Discoveries from the Literature

Many discoveries were made as the literature on interim ministry was surveyed. First, there was a great deal of research and interest in interim ministry which happened in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[1] While congregations had experienced the change of a pastor, there was a significant interest about this time of transition in the life of a congregation. It was found that this time period was not simply a time to wait for the new pastor. Rather, it was and is a time of great potential for a congregation to understand who it is, how it is gifted, its specific context, and the ministry possibilities that exist for the future.

Second, the literature written specifically about the interim period and the tasks which need to be addressed is dated. While there are several journal articles and blogs which have been written in the past three to four years, the books which address the work of the interim pastor and the interim period were written at least ten years ago or more.[2] Speculatively, some reasons for this may be that most mainline denominations have accepted this as a strategy, that mainline denominations are shrinking and there is not the time and energy to devote to this, or that more focus is being placed on church plants. However, the fact remains that the literature is aging.

Third, the literature that does exist provides helpful understanding of the stages of an interim period, the tasks that need to be addressed by the interim pastor, and the tasks

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[1] Anthony B. Robinson, "Rethinking Interim Ministry," *Congregations* 39, no. 4 (2012): 15.

[2] The most recent book, *A Change of Pastors: And How It Affects Change in the Congregation*, was authored by Loren B. Mead and published in 2005. Prior to that was Roger S. Nicholson's *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry* published in 1998, Alan G. Gripe's *The Interim Pastor's Manual* (rev. ed.) in 1997, Loren Mead's *Critical Moment in Ministry: A Change of Pastors* in 1986, Philip Porcher's *What You Can Expect from an Interim Pastor and an Interim Consultant* in 1980, and Ralph Macy's *The Interim Pastor* in 1978. (Full bibliographic information on these books is cited in the Bibliography.)

that need to be completed by the congregation. Nevertheless, while a congregation may go through all the stages and complete the developmental tasks, and while an interim pastor may complete all the process tasks, transformation is not a guarantee. The work of transformation in a congregation is the work of God. The congregation and the interim pastor can take part in the process, but ultimately it is God who transforms the hearts and minds of the members of a congregation.

Fourth, at some point, change will happen in the life of a congregation. Likewise there will be a transition when the congregation deals with the "inevitable changes of life." However, that transition will include people who will move at different paces into the future. Some will long for something new to happen quickly. Some will be unsure of what to do. And, some will long for things to stay the same. An interim pastor needs to understand the various dynamics involved in interim ministry, as well as the emotional systems which are at play, to be able to help the people process what has happened and guide the congregation into what the future may or may not hold.

Fifth, each congregation is different. It has it's own history, identity, ministry foci, and traditions. While an interim pastor is a change agent, he or she needs to be attentive to the ongoing pastoral and ministry needs of the congregation and its leadership while helping them navigate the various stages of the interim as well as the tasks that will help to move them into the future. However, this is only a part of the interim pastor's work. In addition, he or she needs to be attentive to the ongoing pastoral and ministry needs of the staff as they deal with the various stages and dynamics of the interim period.

Discoveries from the Survey

Several discoveries were made from the survey which was administered to ruling elders in five different churches. These discoveries were both expected and unexpected.

The first discovery was one which was unexpected. The researcher assumed that the ruling elders would be united on knowing the basic demographic information about their churches. This assumption proved to be false. It became clear in tabulating the demographic information of the survey that a few of the ruling elders were unsure about the size of their respective congregations, the average worship attendance, and the annual budget. What was most surprising was the reporting of the ethnic compositions of the respective congregations, especially Church #2, #3, and #5.[3] While most of these responses were in general agreement, the difference in the reporting of perceptions was unexpected.

Second, the context of each church in the interim period is important to consider. While each session which participated in the survey was in an interim period, they each had unique situations. Four of the five churches had interim pastors serving on site. Two of the five churches (Church #1 and Church #3)[4] had had interim pastors arrive and depart and currently had subsequent interim pastors because they had not yet called their next installed pastors. Two other churches (Church #2 and Church #4)[5] had interim pastors who had been serving less than a year. And the final church (Church #5) called an interim pastor who was not yet serving on site.[6] Simply stating that a church is in an

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[3] See Appendices L, M, and O.

[4] See Appendices K and M.

[5] See Appendices L and N.

[6] See Appendix O.

interim period does not explain the specific context which the congregation was experiencing.

Third, the results of the survey seem to indicate that when an interim pastor is serving on site the anxiety level of the session and the congregation are lessened. All five of the churches surveyed indicated that anxiety was present when the pastor announced that he or she was leaving. However, when asked if that anxiety level lessened for the congregation and session during the interim period, the churches that had interim pastors serving on site indicated that anxiety had lessened.[7] This was true except for Church #5 which was still awaiting an interim pastor to arrive.[8]

Fourth, the partnership between a session and an interim pastor, who understands the work that needs to be done and can partner with a congregation, is critical to the interim process. As it is the role of the interim pastor to lead a congregation through this critical time he or she needs to know the dynamics of the specific congregation being served, the stages through which the congregation must travel, and the tasks which it needs to complete to successfully navigate the interim period. The interim period is a time in which an interim pastor needs to provide clear communication, foster partnership, and exercise pastoral leadership.

Some Thoughts About Future Research

As interim ministry continues to evolve there are several considerations which may be helpful to consider. First, there are similarities that exist in an interim period. It is a time of change, a time of transition, and hopefully a time of transformation as well. It is

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[7] See Appendices K, L, M, and N.

[8] See Appendix O.

a time of movement toward what is next. The concerns for the wellbeing of the congregation and its ministry are at the core of interim ministry. However, there are concerns for the wellbeing of the staff – both ordained and non-ordained – and their ministry that need to be taken into account as well. While, there is a strong desire to find the next installed pastoral leader, one area of focus for future research would be to assess and address the spiritual and emotional health of the church staff during and following the transition.

Second, the unique context of each congregation deserves attention. This context needs to receive careful attention in the process of the transition. In 2012, Anthony Robinson observed: "When the interim ministry model was created, the job at hand was to change pastors. That meant letting go of the former pastor and preparing for a new one. Today the real work is not just changing pastors – it is changing the culture of congregations."[9] Robinson notes that the pastor is only "one key part" in the life of a congregation.[10] The congregation rightly desires to fill the pastoral role. But, the congregation needs to consider the changes that have taken place internally as well as the external changes that have taken place in its context for ministry. If the interim task has evolved beyond simply changing pastors to changing the culture of the congregation, then there really is no "one size fits all" way to respond to this transition. Therefore, the different dimensions of the context of a congregation need to be considered – age, ethnic background, and social status, as well as theological leanings, education, finances, attendance, community issues and needs, and the significant issues specific to the

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[9] Robinson, 15.

[10] Robinson, 15.

individual congregation. Each of these factors will have an impact on the focus of the transition.

Third, based on the unique context of each congregation, the time frame of the interim period needs to be seriously considered. If, as stated by Robinson, the task is not simply to change pastors but to change the culture of a congregation, two questions need to be explored: What is the time frame for this to be accomplished? Is the congregation open to changing its culture? The underlying assumptions to these questions need to be well thought out with a sense of intentionality. If a change in the culture is what is desired by the congregation, it will probably take considerably more than twelve to eighteen months to bring about the change of the culture in a congregation. This type of situation would necessitate having a longer term pastor in a transitional role, unlike the current interim model.

Fourth, the dynamics of partnership, and what it entails, need to be explored with greater clarity. This includes identifying what a healthy partnership looks like between an interim pastor, a session, and a congregation. But partnership does not end there. The dynamics of partnership need to extend to a church staff. Whether the context is a small church with few staff or a large church with a greater number of staff, the dynamics of staff relationships need to be explored. Staff members are part of the emotional system of the congregation and the emotional system of the staff. In the midst of an interim period the church staff members still need to fulfill their normal ministry responsibilities and functions as they deal with the emotions of the congregation and their own emotions. In addition, they will also have to be prepared to work with a new pastor. When, and if, the

culture of the church changes, that change effects not only the congregation but the staff members as well.

Some Final Thoughts

This thesis-project has been heavily shaped by experiences in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), both of the researcher and of the ruling elders who were surveyed. In addition, it considered only one model of transition, an interim pastor model. While this has been the dominant model used in the mainline churches for the past several decades, it is not the only model for pastoral transition. Whatever model is used, the realities and the shape of change, transition, and transformation continue to be at play in the life of a congregation. When a pastor leaves, change begins. When change begins, the life and ministry in that congregation will not be the same as it was. What was normal will no longer be normal anymore. There will be a new normal that will eventually be established. Some in the congregation will embrace the new normal while others may not. The role of the interim pastor is to walk with, lead, encourage, and shepherd the congregation through the subsequent transition and toward the hoped for transformation. In order for this to happen, there is a critical partnership which must exist between the congregation, its leadership and its transitional or interim leader.

APPENDIX A

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH INTERIM PERIODS

As a pastor I have just entered into my fourth decade of service to Jesus Christ in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). All of those years I have served in various roles in the context of a congregation, twenty one years full-time in installed pastoral positions and nine and one-half years part-time in the capacity as a parish associate while I worked full-time for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in middle and senior management positions. Currently I am serving full-time as an interim associate pastor in southern New England.

The congregations I have served vary in size between 400 members to over 3,000 members spanning the states of New Jersey, New York, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Texas and Connecticut. Each church had a unique context with regard to membership and worship attendance, geographical setting, and socio-economic status.

As a seminary graduate the first congregation I served was as a full-time associate pastor in New Jersey at the Presbyterian Church of New Providence. The congregation of 1,800 members, located in an upper-middleclass bedroom community of New York City, had an estimated weekly worship attendance of 1,200. Over the course of five years my responsibilities included programs for youth and young adults as well as a wide variety of general pastoral functions. After serving there for two and one-half years, the senior pastor announced that he would be leaving. An interim pastor came on staff and served there for two years until a new senior pastor arrived.

The next two churches, in retrospect, were quite a contrast. In both of these churches I served as a part-time parish associate as I worked full-time for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. In Troy, NY I served as an Area Director overseeing college

ministry in Eastern New York State. During this time I partnered in ministry at the Brunswick Presbyterian Church with responsibilities for high school youth, occasional preaching, worship leadership, and pastoral care. The congregation of about 400 members was located in a rural setting approximately seven miles from downtown Troy. The worship attendance averaged about 400 per week and included people from the local community around the church, professors from nearby colleges, students, blue-collar workers, and professional men and women. The pastoral staff in Troy was stable.

After six years in New York, I was transferred to InterVarsity's National Service Center in Madison, WI where I served as the Assistant Director of Training and Education. After my wife, Ruthie, secured a position as a Christian Educator at Westminster Presbyterian Church, I offered to serve at that church as a part-time parish associate. The church had an interim pastor in place and the congregation was in transition. Located in a suburban neighborhood, the church of approximately 400 members had a vital ministry to young families, university professors and professional men and women. My responsibilities included teaching an adult Sunday school class, worship leadership monthly and occasional preaching. There was an average of 220 people in worship weekly. A new pastor arrived and invited me to continue serving there.

Ruthie and I were then called to the First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem, PA to serve on the pastoral staff as co-directors of youth ministry. The congregation was in a suburban setting of a large town. With a membership of 2,400 approximately 1,200 gathered for worship weekly on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings. Though I remained an associate pastor for my tenure in Bethlehem, my responsibilities changed significantly when I was asked to move from youth ministry to serve as executive pastor.

About the same time, the senior pastor announced he was leaving. The church went into a three-year interim period with an interim pastor on staff for two of those years. I served a total of nine years in Bethlehem.

From Bethlehem, Ruthie and I accepted calls to serve on the pastoral staff at First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio, TX where I served as executive pastor and head-of-staff. The church, located in downtown San Antonio, had a worship attendance of approximately 1,100 weekly which declined fifty percent during my tenure. The senior pastor, who followed a long-term and well-loved pastor, stayed only four and one-half years. I had not quite been there eighteen months when he left and the church entered into a two-year interim period. An interim pastor was secured and served for approximately twenty months until the subsequent senior pastor was called. This subsequent senior pastor served less than three years. The congregation again went into an interim period and secured another interim pastor who arrived six months into the vacancy. I left this congregation in the midst of the interim period after serving there a total of seven years.

As I write, I am currently serving as an interim associate pastor at the Noroton Presbyterian Church in Darien, CT. My responsibilities include men's ministry, adult spiritual formation, outreach, preaching and pastoral care. In addition, I am helping to coordinate various administrative tasks surrounding the furnishings and the start up of ministry in a new building. This congregation of 1,500 is one of the largest Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations in New England. Weekly attendance is typically around 450-500 members. My tenure in Darien is estimated to last twelve months.

All of this experience has caused me to reflect on interim ministry – especially with two interim periods in the same congregation. With each experience, I have begun to

have a growing interest in the importance and the shape that interim ministry takes in different contexts. As a staff member, I had a unique opportunity to observe several things. First, I was able to see up close and personal the management style and relationships that were developed or not developed by interim pastors with the staff members, church leadership, and church membership. Second, I was able to listen to what was and what was not communicated with staff members, church leadership, and church membership. And finally, I formed my own conclusions about the work that was or was not being done.

My framework for drawing conclusions was based solely on the experiences I had rather than an understanding of or an appreciation for what the process entailed. It was during the third and fourth interim experiences that I began to learn that there was a process and various tasks that needed to be addressed during this transition. This coincided with my doctoral studies as well. And so, I enrolled in the interim training provided by my synod and began to learn as much as I could about the interim period.

APPENDIX B

THE EIGHT-STEP PROCESS OF SUCCESSFUL CHANGE[1]

Set the Stage
1. Create a Sense of Urgency.
2. Pull Together the Guiding Team.

Decide What to Do
3. Develop the Change Vision and Strategy.

Make it Happen
4. Communicate for Understanding and Buy In.
5. Empower Others to Act.
6. Produce Short-Term Wins.
7. Don't Let Up.

Make it Stick
8. Create a New Culture.

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[1] John P. Kotter and Holger Rathgeber, *Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding under Any Conditions* (New York: St. Martin's, 2006), 130-131.

APPENDIX C

THE ROLE OF THINKING AND FEELING[1]

Thinking differently can help change behavior and lead to better results.
- Collect data, analyze it.
- Present the information logically to change people's thinking.
- Changed thinking, in turn, can change behavior.

Feeling differently can change behavior MORE and lead to even better results.
- Create surprising, compelling, and if possible, visual experiences.
- The experiences change how people feel about a situation.
- A change in feelings can lead to a significant change in behavior.

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[1] John P. Kotter and Holger Rathgeber, *Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding under Any Conditions* (New York: St. Martin's, 2006), 132.

APPENDIX D

THE EIGHT-STAGE PROCESS[1]

1. Establishing a Sense of Urgency
2. Creating the Guiding Coalition
3. Developing a Vision and Strategy
4. Communicating the Change Vision
5. Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action
6. Generating Short-Term Wins
7. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change
8. Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

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[1] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), Table of Contents.

APPENDIX E

**A COMPARISON OF THE EIGHT-STEP PROCESS OF SUCCESSFUL
CHANGE
AND
THE EIGHT-STAGE PROCESS**

The Eight Step Process of Successful Change[1]	The Eight-Stage Process[2]
Create a Sense of Urgency	Establishing a Sense of Urgency
Pull Together the Guiding Team	Creating the Guiding Coalition
Develop the Change Vision and Strategy	Developing a Vision and Strategy
Communicate for Understanding and Buy In	Communicating the Change Vision
Empowering Others to Act	Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action
Produce Short-Term Wins	Generating Short-Term Wins
Don't Let Up	Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change
Create a New Culture	Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

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[1] John P. Kotter and Holger Rathgeber, *Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding under Any Conditions* (New York: St. Martin's, 2006), 130-131.

[2] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), Table of Contents.

APPENDIX F

STAGES OF AN INTERIM PERIOD

Mead[1]	Nicholson[2]	Macy[3]
Termination Direction Finding Self-Study Search Decision/Negotiation Installation Start –Up	Termination Direction Finding Self-Study Search Decision Negotiation Installation Start –Up	Termination Direction Finding Self-Study Search & Selection Negotiation & Decision Start-Up & Installation

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[1] Loren B. Mead, *Critical Moment in Ministry: A Change of Pastors* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1980), 17-35.

[2] Roger S. Nicholson, ed. *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1998), 5-6.

[3] Ralph Macy, *The Interim Pastor* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1978), 4-5.

APPENDIX G

ANALYSIS OF THE FIVE MODELS[1]

Kotter[2]	Bridges[3]	Macy[4]	Mead[5]	Nicholson[6]
Establishing a Sense of Urgency	Letting Go	Termination	Termination	Termination
	The Neutral Zone	Direction Finding	Direction Finding	Direction Finding
Creating the Guiding Coalition				
Developing a Vision and Strategy		Self-Study	Self-Study	Self-Study
		Search & Selection	Search	Search
		Negotiation & Decision	Decision & Negotiation	Decision
				Negotiation
	New Beginning	Start-Up & Installation	Installation	Installation
Communicating the Change Vision			Start –Up	Start –Up
Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action				
Generating Short-Term Wins				
Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change				
Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture				

[1] This chart is a distillation of the researcher's understanding of how the stages of the five models intersect.

[2] John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), Table of Contents.

[3] William Bridges, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1991), 4-5.

[4] Ralph Macy, *The Interim Pastor* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1978), 4-5.

[5] Loren B. Mead, *Critical Moment in Ministry: A Change of Pastors* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1980), 17-35.

[6] Roger S. Nicholson, ed. *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1998), 5-6.

APPENDIX H

THE INTERIM TASKS

The Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor[1]

1. Joining the System
2. Analyzing the Organization as a System
3. Connecting with the Denomination
4. Focusing on and Assuming Responsibilities
5. Exiting and Evaluating

The Developmental Tasks of the Congregation[2]

1. Coming to Terms with History
2. Discovering a New Identity
3. Leadership Changes during an Interim
4. Renewing Denominational Linkages
5. Commitment to New Directions in Ministry

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[1] Alan. G. Gripe, *The Interim Pastor's Manual.* Rev. ed. (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1997), 51.

[2] This is a compilation of the Developmental Tasks as outlined by Alan G. Gripe, the *Interim Pastor's Manual*, Rev. ed., (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1997), 38-50, Loren B. Mead, *Critical Moment in Ministry: A Change of Pastors* (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1986), 36-50, and Roger S. Nicholson, ed. *Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1998), 6-12.

APPENDIX I

MOSES' OBJECTIONS AND THE LORD'S RESPONSES

Objection Regarding Identity:
> "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11)

Response:
> "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." (Exodus 3:12)

Objection Regarding Mandate:
> "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" (Exodus 3:13)

Response:
> "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you." (Exodus 3:14)

Objection Regarding Leadership Abilities:
> "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'?" (Exodus 4:1)

Response:
> "What is that in your hand?"
> "A staff," he replied.
>   The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground."
> Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the LORD said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. "This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob – has appeared to you."
> Then the LORD said, "Put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, the skin was leprous—it had become as white as snow.
>   "Now put it back into your cloak," he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.
>   Then the LORD said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first sign, they may believe the second. But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground." (Exodus 4:2-9)

Objection:

"Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." (Exodus 4:10)

Response:

The LORD said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say." (Exodus 4:11-12)

Objection:

"Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else." (Exodus 4:13)

Response:

Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it." (Exodus 4:14-17)

APPENDIX J

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT
INTERIM SURVEY**

This survey is designed to explore the interim tasks and the partnership between an interim pastor and a congregation in an interim period – the period of time between installed pastors. The information you provide will be helpful to evaluate the communication between an interim pastor and/or a presbytery and a congregation, which is entering, experiencing, or exiting an interim situation.

This study is being conducted by the Reverend John H. Seiders who is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) and a Doctor of Ministry Candidate at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

This survey is anonymous. Please be assured that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The information that you provide will be presented only in summary form, in combination with the responses of other participants in this study. The answers that you give will never be linked with your name. By completing this questionnaire, you have given your consent that you are a voluntary participant in this study.

Thank you in advance for completing this survey.

The Reverend John H. Seiders
Advent 2014

Interim Survey

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please check the appropriate box in or fill in the information requested in each category.

1. What is the size of your congregation?
   - □ 0 – 50
   - □ 51 – 100
   - □ 101 – 250
   - □ 251 – 400
   - □ 401 – 650
   - □ 651 – 800
   - □ 801 – 1,000
   - □ 1,001 – 2,500
   - □ 2,501 – 4,000
   - □ 4,000+

2. What is the average worship attendance in the past year?
   - □ 0 – 50
   - □ 51 – 100
   - □ 101 – 250
   - □ 251 – 400
   - □ 401 – 650
   - □ 651 – 800
   - □ 801 – 1,000
   - □ 1,001 – 2,500
   - □ 2,501 – 4,000
   - □ 4,000+

3. What is the type of community where your church is located?
   - □ Rural
   - □ Village
   - □ Town
   - □ Suburban
   - □ Urban
   - □ Inner City
   - □ College
   - □ Recreation
   - □ Retirement
   - □ Other
   - (please specify)
   - _____

4. What is the general ethnic composition of your congregation? (Estimate in whole percentage.)
   - _____ African American (African, Caribbean)
   - _____ Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Pacific Islander, other Asian)
   - _____ Caucasian
   - _____ Hispanic (Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican)
   - _____ Native American
   - _____ Other (please specify) _____

5. What is amount of your congregation's annual budget?
   - □ Under $49,000
   - □ $50,000 – $99,000
   - □ $100,000 – 249,000
   - □ $250,000 – 499,000
   - □ $500,000 – 749,000
   - □ $750,000 – 900,000
   - □ $1MM – 2.99MM
   - □ $3MM – 4.99MM
   - □ $5 MM+

6. How many ruling elders currently serve on your Session?
   - □ 3 – 6
   - □ 7 – 9
   - □ 10 – 12
   - □ 13 – 15
   - □ 16 – 18
   - □ 19 – 21
   - □ 22 – 24
   - □ 25 – 27
   - □ 28 – 30
   - □ 31 – 40
   - □ 41 – 50
   - □ 51+

7. How many pastors currently serve your congregation? _____

8. How many months have passed since the previous pastor left your congregation?

□ 0 – 1   □ 5 – 6   □ 11 – 12   □ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3   □ 7 – 8   □ 13 – 15   □ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4   □ 9 – 10   □ 16 – 18   □ 30+

9. What is the status of your congregation's transitional period?
    □ We have just entered into the process of seeking an interim pastor.
    □ We have secured an interim pastor. (Proceed to question #10.)
    □ We have completed the interim process and have called a new pastor. (Proceed to question #11.)

10. If your congregation currently has an interim pastor, how many months has he/she been with your congregation?

□ 0 – 1   □ 5 – 6   □ 11 – 12   □ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3   □ 7 – 8   □ 13 – 15   □ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4   □ 9 – 10   □ 16 – 18   □ 30+

11. If you have completed the interim process, how many months did your interim pastor serve your congregation?

□ 0 – 1   □ 5 – 6   □ 11 – 12   □ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3   □ 7 – 8   □ 13 – 15   □ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4   □ 9 – 10   □ 16 – 18   □ 30+

Section 2: Interim Tasks
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has identified various tasks which are to be completed during the interim period. They include Process Tasks and Developmental Tasks. For this section please circle your response to each statement.
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12. Process Tasks:
    These tasks are the work and the responsibility of the interim pastor. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The interim pastor joined the system. (*Joining the system includes observing local customs of the church; identifying groups and networks; listening to local phrases; noting where people gather and when; being a part of regular and special events, traditions and celebrations.*)	SD	D	N	A	SA
b. The interim pastor analyzed the system. (*Analyzing the system includes reviewing the congregational size and attendance figures; noting where the power lies; systems thinking; looking at congregational life cycle issues; initiating a mission study; being familiar with roles, rules and rituals of the congregation; and uncovering unresolved relationships, or secrets.*)	SD	D	N	A	SA

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. The interim pastor connected with the denomination. *(This includes connecting with the governing body for understanding leadership expectations and assistance; reporting regularly; clarifying his/her role in the search process; and, learning what resources are available.)*	SD	D	N	A	SA
d. The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined. *(Effective leaders select issues to emphasize in work realizing that he/she cannot do everything that may need to be done; he/she will start some things and may not finish everything; he/she may need to ask for assistance; and he/she needs to be aware of self-care.)*	SD	D	N	A	SA
e. The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership. *(This includes attending to mutual expressions of joy and sadness; seeking person-to-person contacts with significant relationships; planning and following through with rituals of goodbye; negotiating termination as provided in contract; identifying and celebrating personal and congregational learnings; and making a clean break.)*	SD	D	N	A	SA

13. The Process Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

SD	D	N	A	SA

14. <u>Developmental Tasks</u>:

These tasks are the work and responsibility of the congregation. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Coming to terms with history. *(This includes putting the tenure of the last and former pastors into perspective; acknowledging the past and accepting the "good and the bad;" deciding what is important and worthwhile to carry into the future; providing opportunities for expression of feelings, grief, acceptance, and the importance of moving on.)*	SD	D	N	A	SA
b. Seeking a new identity. *(This includes determining whether the congregation's image is realistic, seeing the interim time as an opportunity for renewal and growth; and, the congregation is seen as an entity without a specific pastor, separating its identity from the former pastor's personality and style.)*	SD	D	N	A	SA

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages. *(This includes having a healthy denominational partnership; being able to see a governing body for what it is and not through a former pastor's eyes; and, reviewing the history of relationship regarding money and trust.)*	SD	D	N	A	SA
d. Facilitating shifts in power and leadership. *(This includes looking at the power and control of decision-making in the congregation; being willing to have a healthy, realistic and open decision-making process; managing conflicts; honoring past leaders and finding ways to keep them involved; and examining the burn-out and drop-out of leaders.)*	SD	D	N	A	SA
e. Commitment to new leadership and a new future. *(This includes having a consensus and excitement about the shared vision of the future; getting a good match between pastor and congregation; having clear and shared expectations between clarity and congregation; and, engaging in a clean exit of the interim pastor and/or consultant.)*	SD	D	N	A	SA

15. The Developmental Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

SD	D	N	A	SA

Section 3: Partnership Information
Please circle your response to each statement.

16. When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious.

SD	D	N	A	SA

17. During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened.

SD	D	N	A	SA

18. Our interim pastor and our congregation worked well together.

SD	D	N	A	SA

19. Our interim pastor worked well with our session.

SD	D	N	A	SA

20. Our session worked well with our interim pastor.

SD	D	N	A	SA

Thank you for your time and participation!

APPENDIX K

INTERIM SURVEY RESULTS: CHURCH #1

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please check the appropriate box in or fill in the information requested in each category.

1. What is the size of your congregation?
5 0 – 50	□ 251 – 400	□ 801 – 1,000	□ 4,000+
3 51 – 100	□ 401 – 650	□ 1,001 – 2,500	
□ 101 – 250	□ 651 – 800	□ 2,501 – 4,000	

2. What is the average worship attendance in the past year?
8 0 – 50	□ 251 – 400	□ 801 – 1,000	□ 4,000+
□ 51 – 100	□ 401 – 650	□ 1,001 – 2,500	
□ 101 – 250	□ 651 – 800	□ 2,501 – 4,000	

3. What is the type of community where your church is located?
□ Rural	□ Suburban	□ College	□ Other
□ Village	□ Urban	□ Recreation	(please specify)
8 Town	□ Inner City	□ Retirement	_____

4. What is the general ethnic composition of your congregation? (Estimate in whole percentage.)

    _____ African American (African, Caribbean)

    _____ Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Pacific Islander, other Asian)

    8/95% Caucasian

    8/5%_ Hispanic (Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican)

    _____ Native American

    _____ Other (please specify) _____

5. What is amount of your congregation's annual budget?
□ Under $49,000	□ $250,000 – 499,000	□ $1MM – 2.99MM
□ $50,000 – $99,000	□ $500,000 – 749,000	□ $3MM – 4.99MM
8 $100,000 – 249,000	□ $750,000 – 900,000	□ $5 MM+

6. How many ruling elders currently serve on your Session?
□ 3 – 6	□ 13 – 15	□ 22 – 24	□ 31 – 40
8 7 – 9	□ 16 – 18	□ 25 – 27	□ 41 – 50
□ 10 – 12	□ 19 - 21	□ 28 – 30	□ 51+

7. How many pastors currently serve your congregation? **8/1 Pastor**

8. How many months have passed since the previous pastor left your congregation?

    ☐ 0 – 1   ☐ 5 – 6   ☐ 11 – 12   ☐ 19 – 24

    ☐ 2 – 3   ☐ 7 – 8   ☐ 13 – 15   **8** 25 – 30

    ☐ 3 – 4   ☐ 9 – 10   ☐ 16 – 18   ☐ 30+

9. What is the status of your congregation's transitional period?

    ☐ We have just entered into the process of seeking an interim pastor.

    8 We have secured an interim pastor. (Proceed to question #10.)

    ☐ We have completed the interim process and have called a new pastor. (Proceed to question #11.)

10. If your congregation currently has an interim pastor, how many months has he/she been with your congregation?

    ☐ 0 – 1   ☐ 5 – 6   ☐ 11 – 12   ☐ 19 – 24

    ☐ 2 – 3   **8** 7 – 8   ☐ 13 – 15   ☐ 25 – 30

    ☐ 3 – 4   ☐ 9 – 10   ☐ 16 – 18   ☐ 30+

11. If you have completed the interim process, how many months did your interim pastor serve your congregation?

    ☐ 0 – 1   ☐ 5 – 6   ☐ 11 – 12   ☐ 19 – 24

    ☐ 2 – 3   ☐ 7 – 8   ☐ 13 – 15   ☐ 25 – 30

    ☐ 3 – 4   ☐ 9 – 10   ☐ 16 – 18   ☐ 30+

Section 2: Interim Tasks

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has identified various tasks which are to be completed during the interim period. They include Process Tasks and Developmental Tasks. For this section please circle your response to each statement.

`

12. <u>Process Tasks</u>:

These tasks are the work and the responsibility of the interim pastor. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The interim pastor joined the system. (*Joining the system includes observing local customs of the church; identifying groups and networks; listening to local phrases; noting where people gather and when; being a part of regular and special events, traditions and celebrations.*)	0	0	1	3	5
b. The interim pastor analyzed the system. (*Analyzing the system includes reviewing the congregational size and attendance figures; noting where the power lies; systems thinking; looking at congregational life cycle issues; initiating a mission study; being familiar with roles, rules an rituals of the congregation; and un-covering unresolved relationships, or secrets.*)	0	0	2	2	4

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. The interim pastor connected with the denomination. *(This includes connecting with the governing body for understanding leadership expectations and assistance; reporting regularly; clarifying his/her role in the search process; and, learning what resources are available.)*	0	0	0	2	6
d. The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined. *(Effective leaders select issues to emphasize in work realizing that he/she cannot do everything that may need to be done; he/she will start some things and may not finish everything; he/she may need to ask for assistance; and he/she needs to be aware of self-care.)*	0	0	0	2	6
e. The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership. *(This includes attending to mutual expressions of joy and sadness; seeking person-to-person contacts with significant relationships; planning and following through with rituals of goodbye; negotiating termination as provided in contract; identifying and celebrating personal and congregational learnings; and making a clean break.)*	0	0	0	4	4

13. The Process Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

0	0	3	4	1

14. Developmental Tasks:

These tasks are the work and responsibility of the congregation. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Coming to terms with history. *(This includes putting the tenure of the last and former pastors into perspective; acknowledging the past and accepting the "good and the bad;" deciding what is important and worthwhile to carry into the future; providing opportunities for expression of feelings, grief, acceptance, and the importance of moving on.)*	0	1	2	3	2
b. Seeking a new identity. *(This includes determining whether the congregation's image is realistic, seeing the interim time as an opportunity for renewal and growth; and, the congregation is seen as an entity without a specific pastor, separating its identity from the former pastor's personality and style.)*	0	0	3	2	3

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages. *(This includes having a healthy denominational partnership; being able to see a governing body for what it is and not through a former pastor's eyes; and, reviewing the history of relationship regarding money and trust.)*	0	0	3	3	2
d. Facilitating shifts in power and leadership. *(This includes looking at the power and control of decision-making in the congregation; being willing to have a healthy, realistic and open decision-making process; managing conflicts; honoring past leaders and finding ways to keep them involved; and examining the burn-out and drop-out of leaders.)*	0	1	1	3	3
e. Commitment to new leadership and a new future. *(This includes having a consensus and excitement about the shared vision of the future; getting a good match between pastor and congregation; having clear and shared expectations between clarity and congregation; and, engaging in a clean exit of the interim pastor and/or consultant.)*	0	0	1	4	3

15. The Developmental Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

0	1	4	1	2

Section 3: Partnership Information
Please circle your response to each statement.

16. When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious.

1	0	2	2	3

17. During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened.

0	2	2	2	2

18. Our interim pastor and our congregation worked well together.

0	0	1	3	4

19. Our interim pastor worked well with our session.

0	0	0	2	6

20. Our session worked well with our interim pastor.

0	0	1	1	6

Thank you for your time and participation!

APPENDIX L

INTERIM SURVEY RESULTS: CHURCH #2

Section 1: Demographic Information
Please check the appropriate box in or fill in the information requested in each category.

1. What is the size of your congregation?
   - □ 0 – 50
   - □ 51 – 100
   - □ 101 – 250
   - □ 251 – 400
   - □ 401 – 650
   - **22** 651 – 800
   - □ 801 – 1,000
   - □ 1,001 – 2,500
   - □ 2,501 – 4,000
   - □ 4,000+

2. What is the average worship attendance in the past year?
   - □ 0 – 50
   - □ 51 – 100
   - □ 101 – 250
   - **22** 251 – 400
   - □ 401 – 650
   - □ 651 – 800
   - □ 801 – 1,000
   - □ 1,001 – 2,500
   - □ 2,501 – 4,000
   - □ 4,000+

3. What is the type of community where your church is located?
   - □ Rural
   - □ Village
   - □ Town
   - **22** Suburban
   - □ Urban
   - □ Inner City
   - □ College
   - □ Recreation
   - □ Retirement
   - □ Other
   - (please specify)
   - _____

4. **What is the general ethnic composition of your congregation? (Estimate in whole percentage.) (See demographic information at the end of this Appendix.)**
   - _____ African American (African, Caribbean)
   - _____ Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Pacific Islander, other Asian)
   - _____ Caucasian
   - _____ Hispanic (Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican)
   - _____ Native American
   - _____ Other (please specify) _____

5. What is amount of your congregation's annual budget?
   - □ Under $49,000
   - □ $50,000 – $99,000
   - □ $100,000 – 249,000
   - □ $250,000 – 499,000
   - □ $500,000 – 749,000
   - □ $750,000 – 900,000
   - **21** $1MM – 2.99MM
   - □ $3MM – 4.99MM
   - □ $5 MM+

6. How many ruling elders currently serve on your Session?
   - □ 3 – 6
   - □ 7 – 9
   - □ 10 – 12
   - □ 13 – 15
   - **22** 16 – 18
   - □ 19 – 21
   - □ 22 – 24
   - □ 25 – 27
   - □ 28 – 30
   - □ 31 – 40
   - □ 41 – 50
   - □ 51+

7. How many pastors currently serve your congregation? **22/4 Pastors; 1/3.5 Pastors**

8. How many months have passed since the previous pastor left your congregation?

□ 0 – 1	**22** 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

9. What is the status of your congregation's transitional period?
    □ We have just entered into the process of seeking an interim pastor.
    20 We have secured an interim pastor. (Proceed to question #10.)
    □ We have completed the interim process and have called a new pastor. (Proceed to question #11.)

10. If your congregation currently has an interim pastor, how many months has he/she been with your congregation?

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
22 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

11. If you have completed the interim process, how many months did your interim pastor serve your congregation? **(Note: 5 responded "N/A.")**

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

Section 2: Interim Tasks

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has identified various tasks which are to be completed during the interim period. They include Process Tasks and Developmental Tasks. For this section please circle your response to each statement.
`

12. Process Tasks:

These tasks are the work and the responsibility of the interim pastor. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The interim pastor joined the system. *(Joining the system includes observing local customs of the church; identifying groups and networks; listening to local phrases; noting where people gather and when; being a part of regular and special events, traditions and celebrations.)*	0	0	0	7	15
b. The interim pastor analyzed the system. *(Analyzing the system includes reviewing the congregational size and attendance figures; noting where the power lies; systems thinking; looking at congregational life cycle issues; initiating a mission study; being familiar with roles, rules an rituals of the congregation; and un-covering unresolved relationships, or secrets.)*	0	0	3	9	10

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. The interim pastor connected with the denomination. *(This includes connecting with the governing body for understanding leadership expectations and assistance; reporting regularly; clarifying his/her role in the search process; and, learning what resources are available.)*	0	0	0	7	15
d. The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined. *(Effective leaders select issues to emphasize in work realizing that he/she cannot do everything that may need to be done; he/she will start some things and may not finish everything; he/she may need to ask for assistance; and he/she needs to be aware of self-care.)*	0	0	2	12	7
e. The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership. *(This includes attending to mutual expressions of joy and sadness; seeking person-to-person contacts with significant relationships; planning and following through with rituals of goodbye; negotiating termination as provided in contract; identifying and celebrating personal and congregational learnings; and making a clean break.)*	0	1	1	3	2

(Note: Four responded "N/A," the remainder left it blank.)

13. The Process Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

0	1	2	8	9

14. Developmental Tasks:

These tasks are the work and responsibility of the congregation. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Coming to terms with history. *(This includes putting the tenure of the last and former pastors into perspective; acknowledging the past and accepting the "good and the bad;" deciding what is important and worthwhile to carry into the future; providing opportunities for expression of feelings, grief, acceptance, and the importance of moving on.)*	0	1	2	14	5
b. Seeking a new identity. *(This includes determining whether the congregation's image is realistic, seeing the interim time as an opportunity for renewal and growth; and, the congregation is seen as an entity without a specific pastor, separating its identity from the former pastor's personality and style.)*	0	2	7	12	1

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages. *(This includes having a healthy denominational partnership; being able to see a governing body for what it is and not through a former pastor's eyes; and, reviewing the history of relationship regarding money and trust.)*	2	0	3	13	4
d. Facilitating shifts in power and leadership. *(This includes looking at the power and control of decision-making in the congregation; being willing to have a healthy, realistic and open decision-making process; managing conflicts; honoring past leaders and finding ways to keep them involved; and examining the burn-out and drop-out of leaders.)*	0	1	5	11	4
e. Commitment to new leadership and a new future. *(This includes having a consensus and excitement about the shared vision of the future; getting a good match between pastor and congregation; having clear and shared expectations between clarity and congregation; and, engaging in a clean exit of the interim pastor and/or consultant.)*	0	1	4	11	6

15. The Developmental Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

0	1	2	12	7

Section 3: Partnership Information
Please circle your response to each statement.

16. When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious.

0	0	0	7	15

17. During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened.

0	0	1	15	6

18. Our interim pastor and our congregation worked well together.

0	0	0	12	10

19. Our interim pastor worked well with our session.

0	0	0	10	12

20. Our session worked well with our interim pastor.

0	0	0	12	10

Thank you for your time and participation!

Ethnic Composition for Church #2

The percentages regarding the general ethnic composition of the congregation were not consistent.

Number of Respondents	African American	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American	Other	Total
10	1	1	83	15	0	0	100
3	4	4	83	10	0	0	101
5	1	1	88	10	0	0	100
1	<1	<1	96	2	0	0	100
1	1	1	0	3	0	95	100
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0.5	0.5	89	10	0	0	100

Numbers in percentages.

Observations:
- The majority of the congregation is Caucasian.
- African Americans and Asians make up a very small percentage of the congregation, up to possibly 4% each for a total of 8%.
- The Hispanic population of this congregation is up to 15%.
- One respondent classified the majority of the congregation as "Other" with no specification noted.

APPENDIX M

INTERIM SURVEY RESULTS: CHURCH #3

Section 1: Demographic Information
Please check the appropriate box in or fill in the information requested in each category.

1. What is the size of your congregation?
   - □ 0 – 50
   - □ 51 – 100
   - □ 101 – 250
   - **2** 251 – 400
   - **6** 401 – 650
   - **1** 651 – 800
   - □ 801 – 1,000
   - □ 1,001 – 2,500
   - □ 2,501 – 4,000
   - □ 4,000+

2. What is the average worship attendance in the past year?
   - □ 0 – 50
   - □ 51 – 100
   - **7** 101 – 250
   - **1** 251 – 400
   - **1** 401 – 650
   - □ 651 – 800
   - □ 801 – 1,000
   - □ 1,001 – 2,500
   - □ 2,501 – 4,000
   - □ 4,000+

3. What is the type of community where your church is located?
   - □ Rural
   - □ Village
   - **6** Town
   - **1** Suburban
   - **2** Urban
   - □ Inner City
   - □ College
   - □ Recreation
   - □ Retirement
   - □ Other
     (please specify)
     _____

4. What is the general ethnic composition of your congregation? (Estimate in whole percentage.) **(See demographic information at the end of this Appendix.)**
   - _____ African American (African, Caribbean)
   - _____ Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Pacific Islander, other Asian)
   - _____ Caucasian
   - _____ Hispanic (Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican)
   - _____ Native American
   - _____ Other (please specify) _____

5. What is amount of your congregation's annual budget?
   - □ Under $49,000
   - □ $50,000 – $99,000
   - □ $100,000 – 249,000
   - **1** $250,000 – 499,000
   - **7** $500,000 – 749,000
   - □ $750,000 – 900,000
   - □ $1MM – 2.99MM
   - □ $3MM – 4.99MM
   - □ $5 MM+

6. How many ruling elders currently serve on your Session?
   - □ 3 – 6
   - □ 7 – 9
   - **1** 10 – 12
   - **2** 13 – 15
   - **4** 16 – 18
   - **1** 19 – 21
   - □ 22 – 24
   - □ 25 – 27
   - □ 28 – 30
   - □ 31 – 40
   - □ 41 – 50
   - □ 51+

7. How many pastors currently serve your congregation? **8/1 Pastor; 1/1 Pastor and a pastoral intern**

8. How many months have passed since the previous pastor left your congregation?

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	**1** 11 – 12	**3** 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	**2** 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	**3** 16 – 18	□ 30+

9. What is the status of your congregation's transitional period?
   - □ We have just entered into the process of seeking an interim pastor.
   - **9** We have secured an interim pastor. (Proceed to question #10.)
   - □ We have completed the interim process and have called a new pastor. (Proceed to question #11.)

10. If your congregation currently has an interim pastor, how many months has he/she been with your congregation?

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	**3** 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	**6** 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

11. If you have completed the interim process, how many months did your interim pastor serve your congregation? **(Note: 1 responded "N/A;" 1 crossed out this question.)**

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

Section 2: Interim Tasks

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has identified various tasks which are to be completed during the interim period. They include Process Tasks and Developmental Tasks. For this section please circle your response to each statement.
`

12. <u>Process Tasks</u>:

These tasks are the work and the responsibility of the interim pastor. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The interim pastor joined the system. (*Joining the system includes observing local customs of the church; identifying groups and networks; listening to local phrases; noting where people gather and when; being a part of regular and special events, traditions and celebrations.*)	**0**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**6**
b. The interim pastor analyzed the system. (*Analyzing the system includes reviewing the congregational size and attendance figures; noting where the power lies; systems thinking; looking at congregational life cycle issues; initiating a mission study; being familiar with roles, rules an rituals of the congregation; and un-covering unresolved relationships, or secrets.*)	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**6**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. The interim pastor connected with the denomination. *(This includes connecting with the governing body for understanding leadership expectations and assistance; reporting regularly; clarifying his/her role in the search process; and, learning what resources are available.)*	0	1	0	2	6
d. The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined. *(Effective leaders select issues to emphasize in work realizing that he/she cannot do everything that may need to be done; he/she will start some things and may not finish everything; he/she may need to ask for assistance; and he/she needs to be aware of self-care.)*	1	0	0	2	6
e. The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership. *(This includes attending to mutual expressions of joy and sadness; seeking person-to-person contacts with significant relationships; planning and following through with rituals of goodbye; negotiating termination as provided in contract; identifying and celebrating personal and congregational learnings; and making a clean break.)*	0	0	1	0	2

13. The Process Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

0	1	0	4	4

14. <u>Developmental Tasks</u>:
   These tasks are the work and responsibility of the congregation. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Coming to terms with history. *(This includes putting the tenure of the last and former pastors into perspective; acknowledging the past and accepting the "good and the bad;" deciding what is important and worthwhile to carry into the future; providing opportunities for expression of feelings, grief, acceptance, and the importance of moving on.)*	0	1	0	6	2
b. Seeking a new identity. *(This includes determining whether the congregation's image is realistic, seeing the interim time as an opportunity for renewal and growth; and, the congregation is seen as an entity without a specific pastor, separating its identity from the former pastor's personality and style.)*	0	1	0	8	0

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages. *(This includes having a healthy denominational partnership; being able to see a governing body for what it is and not through a former pastor's eyes; and, reviewing the history of relationship regarding money and trust.)*	0	1	1	7	0
d. Facilitating shifts in power and leadership. *(This includes looking at the power and control of decision-making in the congregation; being willing to have a healthy, realistic and open decision-making process; managing conflicts; honoring past leaders and finding ways to keep them involved; and examining the burn-out and drop-out of leaders.)*	0	1	0	7	1
e. Commitment to new leadership and a new future. *(This includes having a consensus and excitement about the shared vision of the future; getting a good match between pastor and congregation; having clear and shared expectations between clarity and congregation; and, engaging in a clean exit of the interim pastor and/or consultant.)*	0	1	0	7	0

(Note: One respondent wrote in: "Seems to want to stay as long as possible.)

15. The Developmental Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

SD	D	N	A	SA

Section 3: Partnership Information
Please circle your response to each statement.

16. When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious.

0	1	0	3	5

17. During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened.

1	0	1	6	1

18. Our interim pastor and our congregation worked well together.

0	1	0	7	1

19. Our interim pastor worked well with our session.

0	0	1	5	3

20. Our session worked well with our interim pastor.

0	0	1	7	1

Thank you for your time and participation!

Ethnic Composition for Church #3

The percentages regarding the general ethnic composition of this congregation were not consistent.

Number of Respondents	African American	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American	Other	Total
3	0	0	100	0	0	0	100
1	0	0	95	0	0	5	100
1	0	0	99.5	0.5	0	0	100
1	0	2	95	3	0	0	100
2	1	1	97	1	0	0	100
1	0	0	X	X	0	0	100

Observations:
- This congregation is over 95% Caucasian.
- There is a very small percentage of African American, Asian and Hispanic participants.
- "X" means that both groups were identified by neither was assigned a percentage.

APPENDIX N

INTERIM SURVEY RESULTS: CHURCH #4

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please check the appropriate box in or fill in the information requested in each category.

1. What is the size of your congregation?
□ 0 – 50	□ 251 – 400	□ 801 – 1,000	□ 4,000+
6 51 – 100	□ 401 – 650	□ 1,001 – 2,500	
□ 101 – 250	□ 651 – 800	□ 2,501 – 4,000	

2. What is the average worship attendance in the past year?
1 0 – 50	□ 251 – 400	□ 801 – 1,000	□ 4,000+
5 51 – 100	□ 401 – 650	□ 1,001 – 2,500	
□ 101 – 250	□ 651 – 800	□ 2,501 – 4,000	

3. What is the type of community where your church is located?
□ Rural	**6** Suburban	□ College	□ Other
□ Village	□ Urban	□ Recreation	(please specify)
□ Town	□ Inner City	□ Retirement	_____

4. What is the general ethnic composition of your congregation? (Estimate in whole percentage.)

    _____ African American (African, Caribbean)

    _____ Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Pacific Islander, other Asian)

    6/100% Caucasian

    _____ Hispanic (Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican)

    _____ Native American

    _____ Other (please specify) _____

5. What is amount of your congregation's annual budget?
□ Under $49,000	**1** $250,000 – 499,000	□ $1MM – 2.99MM
□ $50,000 – $99,000	□ $500,000 – 749,000	□ $3MM – 4.99MM
6 $100,000 – 249,000	□ $750,000 – 900,000	□ $5 MM+

    (Note: 1 respondent marked two answers.)

6. How many ruling elders currently serve on your Session?
□ 3 – 6	□ 13 – 15	□ 22 – 24	□ 31 – 40
□ 7 – 9	□ 16 – 18	□ 25 – 27	□ 41 – 50
□ 10 – 12	□ 19 – 21	□ 28 – 30	□ 51+

7. How many pastors currently serve your congregation? **6/1 Pastor**

8. How many months have passed since the previous pastor left your congregation?

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	**1** 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	**5** 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

9. What is the status of your congregation's transitional period?

    □ We have just entered into the process of seeking an interim pastor.

    6 We have secured an interim pastor. (Proceed to question #10.)

    □ We have completed the interim process and have called a new pastor. (Proceed to question #11.)

10. If your congregation currently has an interim pastor, how many months has he/she been with your congregation?

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	**3** 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	**3** 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

11. If you have completed the interim process, how many months did your interim pastor serve your congregation?

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

(One respondent wrote in: "Not Complete.")

Section 2: Interim Tasks

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has identified various tasks which are to be completed during the interim period. They include Process Tasks and Developmental Tasks. For this section please circle your response to each statement.

`

12. <u>Process Tasks</u>:

These tasks are the work and the responsibility of the interim pastor. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The interim pastor joined the system. (*Joining the system includes observing local customs of the church; identifying groups and networks; listening to local phrases; noting where people gather and when; being a part of regular and special events, traditions and celebrations.*)	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**3**
b. The interim pastor analyzed the system. (*Analyzing the system includes reviewing the congregational size and attendance figures; noting where the power lies; systems thinking; looking at congregational life cycle issues; initiating a mission study; being familiar with roles, rules an rituals of the congregation; and un-covering unresolved relationships, or secrets.*)	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**5**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. The interim pastor connected with the denomination. *(This includes connecting with the governing body for understanding leadership expectations and assistance; reporting regularly; clarifying his/her role in the search process; and, learning what resources are available.)*	0	0	0	3	3
d. The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined. *(Effective leaders select issues to emphasize in work realizing that he/she cannot do everything that may need to be done; he/she will start some things and may not finish everything; he/she may need to ask for assistance; and he/she needs to be aware of self-care.)*	0	0	1	1	4
e. The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership. *(This includes attending to mutual expressions of joy and sadness; seeking person-to-person contacts with significant relationships; planning and following through with rituals of goodbye; negotiating termination as provided in contract; identifying and celebrating personal and congregational learnings; and making a clean break.)*	0	0	0	0	0

(Note: One respondent wrote in: "Not yet.")

13. The Process Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

0	0	0	2	4

14. <u>Developmental Tasks</u>:

These tasks are the work and responsibility of the congregation. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Coming to terms with history. *(This includes putting the tenure of the last and former pastors into perspective; acknowledging the past and accepting the "good and the bad;" deciding what is important and worthwhile to carry into the future; providing opportunities for expression of feelings, grief, acceptance, and the importance of moving on.)*	0	0	0	1	5
b. Seeking a new identity. *(This includes determining whether the congregation's image is realistic, seeing the interim time as an opportunity for renewal and growth; and, the congregation is seen as an entity without a specific pastor, separating its identity from the former pastor's personality and style.)*	0	0	1	3	2

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages. *(This includes having a healthy denominational partnership; being able to see a governing body for what it is and not through a former pastor's eyes; and, reviewing the history of relationship regarding money and trust.)*	0	0	0	3	3
d. Facilitating shifts in power and leadership. *(This includes looking at the power and control of decision-making in the congregation; being willing to have a healthy, realistic and open decision-making process; managing conflicts; honoring past leaders and finding ways to keep them involved; and examining the burn-out and drop-out of leaders.)*	0	0	1	3	2
e. Commitment to new leadership and a new future. *(This includes having a consensus and excitement about the shared vision of the future; getting a good match between pastor and congregation; having clear and shared expectations between clarity and congregation; and, engaging in a clean exit of the interim pastor and/or consultant.)*	0	0	0	3	1

15. The Developmental Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

0	0	0	2	4

Section 3: Partnership Information
Please circle your response to each statement.

16. When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious.

0	0	0	3	3

17. During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened.

0	0	0	4	2

18. Our interim pastor and our congregation worked well together.

0	0	0	3	3

19. Our interim pastor worked well with our session.

0	0	0	3	3

20. Our session worked well with our interim pastor.

0	0	0	3	3

Thank you for your time and participation!

APPENDIX O

INTERIM SURVEY RESULTS: CHURCH #5

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please check the appropriate box in or fill in the information requested in each category.

1. What is the size of your congregation?

   □ 0 – 50   □ 251 – 400   **1** 801 – 1,000   □ 4,000+
   □ 51 – 100   □ 401 – 650   **19** 1,001 – 2,500
   □ 101 – 250   □ 651 – 800   □ 2,501 – 4,000

2. What is the average worship attendance in the past year?

   □ 0 – 50   □ 251 – 400   **1** 801 – 1,000   □ 4,000+
   □ 51 – 100   **3** 401 – 650   □ 1,001 – 2,500
   □ 101 – 250   **17** 651 – 800   □ 2,501 – 4,000

   (Note: One marked two boxes.)

3. What is the type of community where your church is located?

   □ Rural   □ Suburban   □ College   □ Other
   □ Village   **11** Urban   □ Recreation   (please specify)
   □ Town   **10** Inner City   □ Retirement   _____

   (Note: One marked two boxes.)

4. What is the general ethnic composition of your congregation? (Estimate in whole percentage.) **(Note: See demographic information at the end of this Appendix.)**

   _____ African American (African, Caribbean)
   _____ Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Pacific Islander, other Asian)
   _____ Caucasian
   _____ Hispanic (Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican)
   _____ Native American
   _____ Other (please specify) _____

5. What is amount of your congregation's annual budget?

   □ Under $49,000   □ $250,000 – 499,000   **1** $1MM – 2.99MM
   □ $50,000 – $99,000   □ $500,000 – 749,000   **19** $3MM – 4.99MM
   □ $100,000 – 249,000   □ $750,000 – 900,000   □ $5 MM+

6. How many ruling elders currently serve on your Session?

   □ 3 – 6   □ 13 – 15   **17** 22 – 24   □ 31 – 40
   □ 7 – 9   □ 16 – 18   **1** 25 – 27   □ 41 – 50
   □ 10 – 12   **2** 19 – 21   □ 28 – 30   □ 51+

7. How many pastors currently serve your congregation? **18/3 Pastors; 2/5 Pastors**

8. How many months have passed since the previous pastor left your congregation?

□ 0 – 1	**13** 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
1 2 – 3	**2** 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
4 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

9. What is the status of your congregation's transitional period?
   □ We have just entered into the process of seeking an interim pastor.
   19 We have secured an interim pastor. (Proceed to question #10.)
   1 We have completed the interim process and have called a new pastor. (Proceed to question #11.)

10. If your congregation currently has an interim pastor, how many months has he/she been with your congregation? **(Note: Four wrote: "N/A.")**

14 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

11. If you have completed the interim process, how many months did your interim pastor serve your congregation? **(Note: Seven wrote: "N/A.")**

□ 0 – 1	□ 5 – 6	□ 11 – 12	□ 19 – 24
□ 2 – 3	□ 7 – 8	□ 13 – 15	□ 25 – 30
□ 3 – 4	□ 9 – 10	□ 16 – 18	□ 30+

Section 2: Interim Tasks

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has identified various tasks which are to be completed during the interim period. They include Process Tasks and Developmental Tasks. For this section please circle your response to each statement.
`

12. <u>Process Tasks:</u> **(Note: Eleven wrote "N/A" for 12a-e.)**
   These tasks are the work and the responsibility of the interim pastor. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The interim pastor joined the system. *(Joining the system includes observing local customs of the church; identifying groups and networks; listening to local phrases; noting where people gather and when; being a part of regular and special events, traditions and celebrations.)*	1	0	4	0	0
b. The interim pastor analyzed the system. *(Analyzing the system includes reviewing the congregational size and attendance figures; noting where the power lies; systems thinking; looking at congregational life cycle issues; initiating a mission study; being familiar with roles, rules an rituals of the congregation; and un-covering unresolved relationships, or secrets.)*	1	0	4	0	0

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. The interim pastor connected with the denomination. *(This includes connecting with the governing body for understanding leadership expectations and assistance; reporting regularly; clarifying his/her role in the search process; and, learning what resources are available.)*	1	0	4	0	0
d. The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined. *(Effective leaders select issues to emphasize in work realizing that he/she cannot do everything that may need to be done; he/she will start some things and may not finish everything; he/she may need to ask for assistance; and he/she needs to be aware of self-care.)*	1	0	4	0	0
e. The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership. *(This includes attending to mutual expressions of joy and sadness; seeking person-to-person contacts with significant relationships; planning and following through with rituals of goodbye; negotiating termination as provided in contract; identifying and celebrating personal and congregational learnings; and making a clean break.)*	1	0	4	0	0

13. The Process Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery. **(Note: Four wrote: "N/A.")**

1	0	3	4	5

14. <u>Developmental Tasks</u>: **(Note: Five wrote "N/A" for 14a-e.)**
    These tasks are the work and responsibility of the congregation. Please answer the following questions regarding your thoughts about whether this work is being or has been completed.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Coming to terms with history. *(This includes putting the tenure of the last and former pastors into perspective; acknowledging the past and accepting the "good and the bad;" deciding what is important and worthwhile to carry into the future; providing opportunities for expression of feelings, grief, acceptance, and the importance of moving on.)*	1	1	5	7	0
b. Seeking a new identity. *(This includes determining whether the congregation's image is realistic, seeing the interim time as an opportunity for renewal and growth; and, the congregation is seen as an entity without a specific pastor, separating its identity from the former pastor's personality and style.)*	1	1	5	6	1

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
c. Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages. *(This includes having a healthy denominational partnership; being able to see a governing body for what it is and not through a former pastor's eyes; and, reviewing the history of relationship regarding money and trust.)*	2	2	5	4	1
d. Facilitating shifts in power and leadership. *(This includes looking at the power and control of decision-making in the congregation; being willing to have a healthy, realistic and open decision-making process; managing conflicts; honoring past leaders and finding ways to keep them involved; and examining the burn-out and drop-out of leaders.)*	1	2	5	6	0
e. Commitment to new leadership and a new future. *(This includes having a consensus and excitement about the shared vision of the future; getting a good match between pastor and congregation; having clear and shared expectations between clarity and congregation; and, engaging in a clean exit of the interim pastor and/or consultant.)*	1	1	5	7	0

15. The Developmental Tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery. **(Six wrote: "N/A.")**

2	1	5	5	1

Section 3: Partnership Information
Please circle your response to each statement.

16. When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious.

0	0	0	4	16

17. During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened. **(Note: Five wrote: "N/A.")**

4	6	1	0	1

18. Our interim pastor and our congregation worked well together. **(Note: Nine wrote: "N/A.")**

0	0	6	0	0

19. Our interim pastor worked well with our session. **(Note: Ten wrote: "N/A.")**

0	0	6	0	0

20. Our session worked well with our interim pastor. **(Note: Ten wrote: "N/A.")**

0	0	6	0	0

Thank you for your time and participation!

Ethnic Composition for Church #5

The percentages regarding the general ethnic composition of the congregation were not consistent.

Number of Respondents	African American	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American	Other	Total
1	<1	0	95	4	0	0	100
1	2	1	87	10	0	0	100
1	0	0	86	10	0	0	96
1	0	0	98	2	0	0	100
1	5	5	80	10	0	0	100
1	1	0	85	9	0	0	95
5	0	0	100	0	0	0	100
1	1	0	97	2	0	0	100
1	1	1	93	5	0	0	100
1	1	0	95	4	0	0	100
1	2.5	2.5	85	10	0	0	100
1	5	0	85	10	0	0	100
1	0	1	98	1	0	0	100
1	0	0	95	0	0	0	95
1	1	1	95	3	0	0	100
1	1	5	69	25	1	0	101
1	0	0	98	1	1	0	100

Numbers are in percentages

Observations on self-reported data:
- This is a predominantly Caucasian congregation.
- The estimation of African American and Asian participants is 5% or less while the estimation of Native American participants is at 1% or less.
- The estimation of Hispanic participants is from 0 to 25%.
- The estimation of Native American participants is 1% or less.
- While there seems to be a general agreement on the percentage of African American, Asian and Native American participants, there is a wide disagreement on the percentage of Hispanic participants.

APPENDIX P

**RAW DATA: INTERIM TASKS AND PARTNERSHIP
INFORMATION**

The following tables contain the raw data that was collected from the
survey for Section 2: Interim Tasks and Section 3: Partnership Tasks. The
data provides two totals for each question: a combined total of the
responses for Churches #1-5 and a total without Church #5. Please note
that the full explanatory statements for questions 12a-e and 14a-e are not
included. In addition, the following abbreviations are used: "SD" for
"Strongly Disagree," "D" for "Disagree," "N" for "Neutral," "A" for
"Agree," "SA" for "Strongly Agree," "N/A" for "Not Applicable," "PR"
for "Possible Responses," and "TR" for "Total Responses."

**Question
Number**   **Interim Tasks**

          Process Tasks of the Interim Pastor

12 a   The interim pastor joined the system.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	1	2	5	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	0	7	15	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	0	2	6	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	3	3	0	6	6
Church #5	1	0	4	0	0	11	20	16
Totals - All Churches	1	1	5	14	29	11	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	1	1	14	29	0	45	45

12 b   The interim pastor analyzed the system.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	2	2	4	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	3	9	10	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	1	1	6	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	1	5	0	6	6
Church #5	1	0	4	0	0	11	20	16
Totals - All Churches	1	1	10	13	25	11	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	1	6	13	25	0	45	45

12 c   The interim pastor connected with the denomination.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	0	2	6	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	0	7	15	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	0	2	6	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	3	3	0	6	6
Church #5	1	0	4	0	0	11	20	16
Totals - All Churches	1	1	4	14	30	11	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	1	0	14	30	0	45	45

12 d   The interim pastor worked with specific focus and attended to the responsibilities that were outlined.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	0	2	6	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	2	12	7	0	22	21
Church #3	1	0	0	2	6	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	1	1	4	0	6	6
Church #5	1	0	4	0	0	11	20	16
Totals - All Churches	2	0	7	17	23	11	65	60
Totals without Church #5	1	0	3	17	23	0	45	44

12 e   The interim pastor exited and provided an evaluation of the interim period to the leadership.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	0	4	4	0	8	8
Church #2	0	1	1	3	2	0	22	7
Church #3	0	1	0	7	0	0	9	8
Church #4	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Church #5	1	0	4	0	0	11	20	16
Totals - All Churches	1	2	5	14	6	11	65	39
Totals without Church #5	0	2	1	14	6	0	45	23

13   The process tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	3	4	1	0	8	8
Church #2	0	1	2	8	9	0	22	20
Church #3	0	1	0	4	4	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	2	4	0	6	6
Church #5	1	0	3	4	5	4	20	17
Totals - All Churches	1	2	8	22	23	4	65	60
Totals without Church #5	0	2	5	18	18	0	45	43

Developmental Tasks of the Congregation

14   a   Coming to terms with history.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	1	2	3	2	0	8	8
Church #2	0	1	2	14	5	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	0	6	2	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	1	5	0	6	6
Church #5	1	1	5	7	0	5	20	19
Totals - All Churches	1	4	9	31	14	5	65	64
Totals without Church #5	0	3	4	24	14	0	45	45

14   b   Seeking a new identity.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	3	2	3	0	8	8
Church #2	0	2	7	12	1	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	0	8	0	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	1	3	2	0	6	6
Church #5	1	1	5	6	1	5	20	19
Totals - All Churches	1	4	16	31	7	5	65	64
Totals without Church #5	0	3	11	25	6	0	45	45

14   c   Rethinking and strengthening denominational linkages.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	3	3	2	0	8	8
Church #2	2	0	3	13	4	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	1	7	0	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	3	3	0	6	6
Church #5	2	2	5	4	1	5	20	19
Totals - All Churches	4	3	12	30	10	5	65	64
Totals without Church #5	2	1	7	26	9	0	45	45

14   d   Facilitating shifts in power and leadership.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	1	1	3	3	0	8	8
Church #2	0	1	5	11	4	0	22	21
Church #3	0	1	0	7	1	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	1	3	2	0	6	6
Church #5	1	2	5	6	0	5	20	19
Totals - All Churches	1	5	12	30	10	5	65	63
Totals without Church #5	0	3	7	24	10	0	45	44

14   e   Commitment to new leadership and a new future.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	1	4	3	0	8	8
Church #2	0	1	4	11	6	1	22	23
Church #3	0	1	0	7	0	0	9	8
Church #4	0	0	1	3	2	0	6	6
Church #5	1	1	5	7	0	5	20	19
Totals - All Churches	1	3	11	32	11	6	65	64
Totals without Church #5	0	2	6	25	11	1	45	45

15   The developmental tasks listed above have been explained to us by our interim pastor or by a representative of the presbytery.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	1	4	1	2	0	8	8
Church #2	0	1	2	12	7	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	0	4	4	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	2	4	0	6	6
Church #5	2	1	5	5	1	6	20	20
Totals - All Churches	2	4	11	24	18	6	65	65
Totals without Church #5	0	3	6	19	17	0	45	45

Partnership Data

16   When it was announced that our pastor was leaving the congregation and the session were anxious.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	1	0	2	2	3	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	0	7	15	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	0	3	5	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	3	3	0	6	6
Church #5	0	0	0	4	16	0	20	20
Totals - All Churches	1	1	2	19	42	0	65	65
Totals without Church #5	1	1	2	15	26	0	45	45

17   During the interim period the anxiety of the congregation and the session lessened.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	2	2	2	2	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	1	15	6	0	22	22
Church #3	1	0	1	6	1	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	4	2	0	6	6
Church #5	4	6	1	0	1	5	20	17
Totals - All Churches	5	8	5	27	12	5	65	62
Totals without Church #5	1	2	4	27	11	0	45	45

18   Our interim pastor and our congregation worked well together.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	1	3	4	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	0	12	10	0	22	22
Church #3	0	1	0	7	1	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	3	3	0	6	6
Church #5	0	0	6	0	0	9	20	15
Totals - All Churches	0	1	7	25	18	9	65	60
Totals without Church #5	0	1	1	25	18	0	45	45

19   Our interim pastor worked well with our session.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	0	2	6	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	0	10	12	0	22	22
Church #3	0	0	1	5	3	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	3	3	0	6	6
Church #5	0	0	6	0	0	10	20	16
Totals - All Churches	0	0	7	20	24	10	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	0	1	20	24	0	45	45

20   Our session worked well with our interim pastor.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	N/A	PR	TR
Church #1	0	0	1	1	6	0	8	8
Church #2	0	0	0	12	10	0	22	22
Church #3	0	0	1	7	1	0	9	9
Church #4	0	0	0	3	3	0	6	6
Church #5	0	0	6	0	0	10	20	16
Totals - All Churches	0	0	8	23	20	10	65	61
Totals without Church #5	0	0	2	23	20	0	45	45

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